

Gelett Burgess's Colossal Satire on New York Life.

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THE SMART SET

A
MAG
AZINE
OF

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"THE
RESTORATION
OF MISS WILLY
MACNEAL,"
by Algernon Tassin.

"THE CLEVER
MRS. SALISBURY,"
by Anne Warner.

"SIMEON CRAIG'S LAST WORDS,"
by Frederic Taber Cooper.

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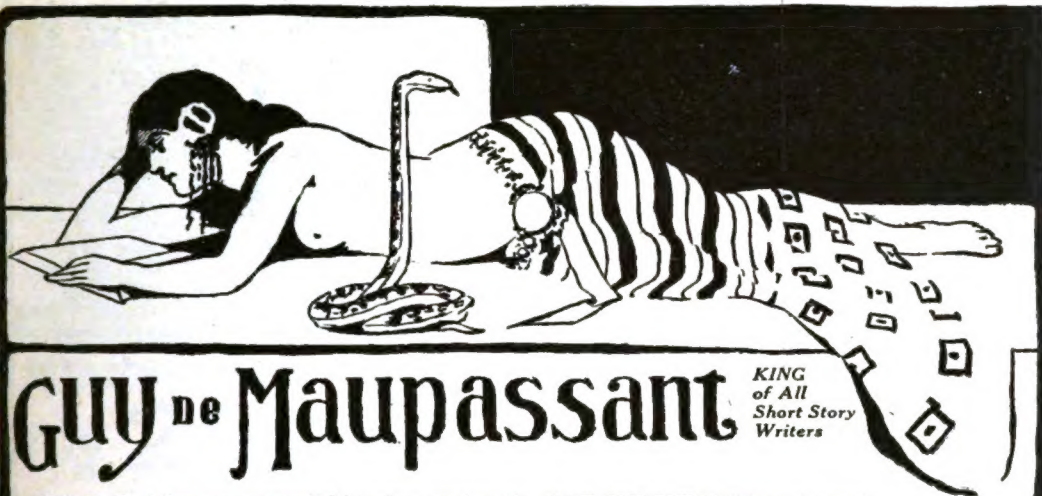
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A MAGAZINE OF CLEVERNESS

No. 2

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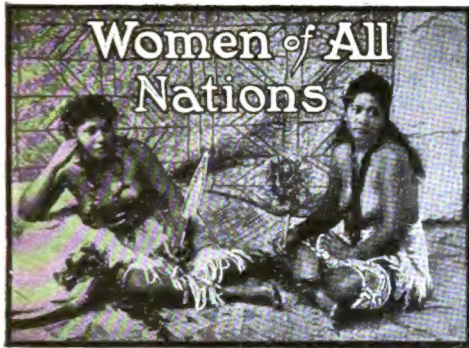
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THE CAVE MAN

By GELETT BURGESS

Here is a gentleman, my scholar, whom (for some private reasons me specially moving) I am covetous to gratify with title of master in the noble and subtle science of courtship.

—CYNTHIA'S REVELS.

IT is the French who have to perfection the art of making of whatever is naughty, nice, and what is nice, naughty. Wherefore, let us not call the lady's beauty devilish, but nominate its fascinating quality that of *diablerie*. *Beauté de diable* she had as well—though that is quite another thing—for she was but twenty-four. She had, in short, that sort of beauty which is called "troublesome," and few men will need further commentary upon her looks.

Women, however, might have said that she was probably more fond of men than of women. They might have said with perhaps more truth that men were fonder of her than were women. Nor would they have wondered why; it was written in the delicious curve of her lips, in the evanescent, shadowy, waxing-waning dimple on her cheek, in the very crinkles of her eyelids. But whether one be the cause or the effect of the other, who can say? Ask Demiourgos, maker of men!

Women, also, might say that she had no soul. A man's answer would come as plainly: she did not need one. She did very well without, thank you; for there she was, most intensely and distractingly her own whimsical self, gifted with an original and provocative originality. She had more cinnamon and clove than sugar in her nature, though she was sweet enough, too. But her charm was unanalyzable. Let us finish an impossible description, and call her "rare."

Rare she was, and fair she was, and she was twenty-four, this precious, ruddy-haired nonpareil who, in the seventeenth story of the Flatiron Building, gazed jauntily from the window down upon the traffic of New York. Gazed, and wondered, wondered, and let loose an exquisite smile, more dangerous than dynamite, more searching than radium, more swift and potent than electricity. One seeing her might have said of her, as the old slab in the Plymouth graveyard says of Fanny Crombie at the age of eight:

As young as beautiful, as soft as young,
As gay as soft, as innocent as gay,

and would have missed her description by but one adjective. She was not, perhaps, so innocent as she looked, though her peccadillos were not venal.

The room, in the acute angle of the building, was triangular, and the window in its point looked up Broadway and Fifth Avenue both. It commanded Madison Square with its greenery as well. It gave upon the heart of the metropolis, at the lower end of the Great White Way. The apartment, intended for some sober, unimaginative insurance office, contained an exotic collection of furnishings. It was, in point of fact, a lady's drawing-room, conceived in European style, a finished perfect whole in scheme and detail. Yet it was as original as the taste of so rare a lady should be, and showed the same personality, the same spicy taste. Commodious, comfortable, even to restfulness, with high lights, with elegance in its ornament and a tendency that ran rather to harmonies than to contrasts, it showed the mark of her mind throughout, and fitted her as a

frame its portrait. No man would have feared to trust her chairs; no woman could criticize her hangings; but neither would have noticed aught else when their hostess was in evidence. No need, then, to catalogue the room's items, except, perhaps, to remark a portrait of the lady herself by Boldini, which set the appropriate keynote of the whole. In that presentment she sat upon a golden chair, a little more feline, a little more eighteenth century, a little more pointed as to mouth and eyes than was due her charm, but the lady herself indubitably, apparently about to smile and toss a jest across the greenish brown carpet. During her rare moments of sober introspection it even rivaled her in liveliness and persuasive force, but when the real smile came the picture receded to its frame, sighed and fell asleep.

And, to finish, there was no silver in the place, no whitish sheen such as ladies commonly affect; what was not gold was copper, burnished to a glowing red.

But she has rested there at the window ambient-eyed too long. Let's move her, like a puppet, and permit New York to thrill at the touch of her pink finger.

Did your pulse quicken that day, as you crossed the windy angle of the great building? Did no thrill X-ray you as you maneuvered along the windy thoroughfare of Twenty-third Street? Perhaps not, for you were not her mark. Yet that smile of hers found its bull's-eye, though she shot with both eyes shut. Destiny aimed her arrow; this lovely lady did but pull the cord.

That ingenious smile had been fath-ered by a deft resolve, and mothered by the lady's love of mystery. Her mind made up, she returned to her *escritoire* and drew from a pigeonhole a yellow hundred-dollar bill. This, with a quick motion of her gracile fingers, she tore in halves. One went back to the pigeonhole, the other into a square envelope. Next she sat down to write. There was some small nibbling of her gold penholder, some scowling of her arched

brows, before ink touched paper; but a few seconds after there appeared, in a bold feminine hand and with but a single flourish at the end, the following wet words:

If the finder of this is a woman, give it to the nearest man. If a man, call at Room No. 1798, Flatiron Building as soon as possible for the other half of the enclosed bill.

This note she tucked into the envelope and sealed the flap. Lastly, she walked gaily to the window and looked out for a moment, and then flung her missive forth upon the breeze.

The wind, parted by the wedge-shaped bulk of the Flatiron Building, plays many capers in the vicinity. With wanton wiles it mischiefs with the skirts of pedestrians, it snatches hats from heads and sends them aeroplaning aloft, it scurries in eddies and whirlpools, it describes helter-skelter routes in curves and dizzying zigzags. The most sedate blast, in its progress across the island, here plays truant for a half-hour to torture and baffle passers-by. The air was an arrant madcap that day; it blew in six directions at once, like an intoxicated tornado. My lady's square envelope went up and north, then downward toward the east, then slanted, skimming one way and another, suddenly dropping, suddenly rising, off on a tangent, round in a curve, sweeping to right and sloping to left, now fast, now slow. It rose, at one time, far above the roof of the building and hurried toward Madison Square tower; in another minute it had sailed downward almost to the sidewalk; then it went up and up again, almost perpendicularly, to change its mind before it sought an entrance to the Fifth Avenue Building and drive post-haste over Madison Square.

And as it dipped and tilted, the sunlight caught it or the shadow obscured its form. For minutes it was invisible, only to appear higher and beyond, or nearer and below, in a flash like a heliograph. Then it drew a bright arc across the façade of a Broadway store and was lost again. It fluttered into sight like a butterfly and disappeared. The last sight of it showed a twinkling

dot of white over the shadowy green of the Square. It went out and was gone.

The lady sighed and closed the window. Her bolt was sent.

She shrugged her shoulders and turned to the telephone. An order for a manicure was dispatched, with specifications that she should be a blonde—not red. Another message called a masseuse—here she required a brunette. These errands accomplished, the lady threw herself upon a couch, took up a magazine, fluttered its pages for a while and finally composed herself to wait for their attendance, plunged in a day dream.

Haulick Smagg, his eyes fixed upon the ground, his coal shovel over his shoulder, heaved his six feet of bulk stolidly across Madison Square, walking as heavily as a dray horse. From his bony, ovoid head his eyeballs looked out through a grime of coal dust, and beneath them a row of white teeth cut a horizontal line across his visage. The rest of his face was lost in the *mélange* of dirt, hair and matted whiskers, all save two great ears, one on each side of his skull, poised winglike, as if for flight. His carnivorous jaw worked ponderously upon a cud of tobacco; his left arm swung back and forth like a piece of crude machinery. His dress was nondescript, blackened to a homogeneous filthiness by the pasty soot. There was little charm about Haulick Smagg, small subtlety and less poetry. He was a walking clod, a human animal, a Thing.

He had been discharged from the coal yard that noon, and no vernal joyance filled his heart. As he crossed the Square his thoughts, if he thought at all, were fixed on dinner. The spasmodic rise and fall of the fountain in the pool sent him no message of hope or beauty; the leafage, so tenderly green about him, conjured no esthetic thrill. Dinner obsessed him. He still had twenty-two cents left wherewith to eat and drink, and skulkily he planned his meal. The necessity, at this crisis, of getting drunk worried him; and he planned his campaign. To get dinner and get

drunk on twenty-two cents was the greatest problem, so far, he had ever had to solve.

Haulick Smagg—but why Haulick? Ah! His mother had been a gipsy; with the name she gave him, a strain of something Oriental wandered through his thick blood. Kidnapped on Hampstead Heath by a pious, erratic Non-conformist parson who had hoped to rescue a soul from vagrancy and perdition, the Romany waif had grown up in the scullery of the parson's home at Dorking. Her heredity, however, had proved stronger than environment. The call of the wind stirred her and she was off a-roving at fifteen. Her voyage, brief but lively, ended when she met Bill Smagg, and she came safely into the port of wifehood. With that she espoused respectability, her only infidelities being occasional dreams of romance consequent upon her habitual fondness for eel pie. It was in one of these pleasant visions that the name was revealed unto her. It was a dream of a gorgeous Italian with a green shirt and yellow, floating scarf, who swore heroically upon a Thames river barge. As he stood upon the stern of his craft the name "Samuel J. Haulick" showed plainly beneath him. The dream, recounted to Mr. Smagg so soon after his ninth son was born, seemed portentous to both the parents. The neighbors thought so, too, and the fishmonger, as well as the keeper of the eel pie house around the corner. The result was that the infant was named Haulick Smagg and thrived accordingly.

At the age of five, however, Haulick Smagg had succeeded in running away from home, made his way to Southampton, and, after a few years of vicissitude, stowed himself away upon the bark *Scarletina* and was carried to New York. From this port he had never departed. Forgot was his gipsy mother, forgot his father, forgot the eel pie house and forgot his native idiom and dialect. Haulick was, for all he knew, an American; he knew, at least, that he was a coal heaver who had lost his job, and was now treading an unaccustomed part of the city.

(At last we have caught up with him. He has passed the nursemaids now, passed the policeman watching the nursemaids, passed the men with newspapers, sleeping, passed the khaki-clad recruiting sergeant.)

Why he crossed the Square he did not know. But Destiny drew him. Destiny and dinner.

Of a sudden something drew his eyes from the flagged walk and raised them to a figure ahead. To him it was but a lady—a creature out of his world, out of his ken, an object as foreign as the angels, as inaccessible as champagne, as mysterious as money. What ladies were made of he neither knew nor desired to know; what they did he had never even wondered. He accepted them as parts of the city's fauna, a little less strange than pigeons, a little more difficult than dogs—bright clad animals which, though seemingly harmless, he distrusted and avoided. That they were human, that they had anything physically or mentally in common with such women as he had known, had never entered his head.

With a thrill of terror the fact broke through his torpor that this one, holding something white in her hand, smiling magically, was definitely, positively approaching him; she was intending to speak. To speak to *him*? The idea was madness; his brain reeled and turned backward. But he had scant time for wonder.

She was jauntily clad in the extreme of the jaunty fashion of that day, complete from hat to heels, as smart as he was squalid, as graceful as he was glum. Slim as a snake was Dolly Van Dream that April day, in a blue tailor-made suit that made every female passer-by suspect her figure. Her hat was black, her gloves milk white; her shoes twinkled like mirrors on her high-arched little feet. The modiste who had turned her out, fresh and sharp from the stylish mold of the hour, may have turned out many like her, but none so spick, none so clean, none so silkily smooth and cleverly right and trim and taut and gladsome.

She stopped in front of him—actually

stopped, did she—and held a white envelope out to him. He had never been so near to a lady's clean-cut head, white skin and animated eyes. He gripped his shovel and stared wildly, his mouth ajar.

"Here," she said, and to Haulick Smagg her voice was cadenced as if it came from miles away—from the moon, or Sirius. "Here, my good man, take this. It may be worth your while."

He was now stricken, and stood an insensate statue of surprise.

"Let me explain it for you," she went on, and, drawing a sheet of paper from the envelope, she pointed to some writing. "It says here that if you take this to Room 1798 in the Flatiron Building"—she waved airily to the colossal wedge—"you will get a hundred dollars. See, here is one half of a hundred-dollar bill." Her slim fingers plucked the torn yellow bill from its nest. "Would you like to try it?"

He had never seen a hundred-dollar bill before; no, never a fifty. To him money was green and dirty and wrinkled always, and always stained and torn. But her words—though with her accent they came as foreign as French—aroused an instinct, and he put forth his hand. If this thing were indeed money he should lose no time. He grabbed it from her with a crafty plunge, and crumpled it in his fingers. But speech came not unto him.

"You see, it says that a woman can't have it," Miss Van Dream went sweetly on, "and I was requested to give it to the nearest man. It sounds interesting, and I'm sorry I'm not eligible. So you're to take this to the room and you'll be given the other half. A hundred dollars. Will you do it?" She looked at him with well-bred curiosity. Social emergencies had schooled her and she dared to smile.

Slowly he released his fingers and gazed at the crumpled bill as if it had been an imprisoned bird and might escape. He put it to his nose and smelled it. Yes, it smacked of money. Perhaps the dream was true! Then he opened his lips. Perhaps a drop of gipsy blood grew potent in him; per-

haps there is a very spirit in wealth that inspires and exalts, a power that informs ignorance and quickens apathy.

"Thanks!" His voice came raucous, but it came. "I'll do it!" It was his first moral victory. The spark had lighted up his soul. He had spoken to a lady. But, with a sudden reflex, his fingers tightened upon the treasure.

Then, "Gimme the paper!" he exclaimed.

He grabbed that, too, and read it painfully, the stumpy end of his black forefinger traveling slowly along the lines. Miss Van Dream gazed at him amused. A few passers-by stopped and stared. Her proud gaze swept them on like a chill breeze. As they stood there a policeman caught sight of this Beauty and the Beast and started saunteringly their way. The movement aroused her to action.

"Listen, my good man," she said. "Now that I've done something for you, I'm going to ask you to do something for me. After you've got the hundred dollars up there, will you come and tell me all about it?"

"Huh?"

She repeated the question,

"Oh, sure!" he grinned. The leaven of wealth was working in his brain.

"But perhaps it will take some time," she added. "I think I'd better make an appointment with you for tomorrow. I tell you! Come up to my studio at any time tomorrow and tell me all about it, and I'll give you another hundred dollars!"

This was too much. One glass of wine will exhilarate; the second may stupefy. So with money. One hundred had awakened Haulick Smagg's dormant manhood. Two hundred was not so easily digested. He sank back into dumbness, and could only wag his head.

It was enough for Dolly, however, and she opened a red leather bag and drew out a card. Upon it was her name, with the address, "404 High-brow Hall." He groped for it as through the dark.

"A hundred dollars!" she said cheerily, nodding at him, and was off

before the policeman could take her measure.

There was no need for repetition to stun Haulick Smagg; he was already almost unconscious in contemplation of his fortune. Two hundred dollars; to him it spelled millions—drunks perpetual, an alcoholic epic. He dropped into a bench to set his dull wits to an unaccustomed labor. His gipsy blood came to the rescue again, and, pushing at his mind, set it at last in motion. With increasing momentum mere thoughts grew to ideas and ideas to projects. He turned to his neighbor, an old lady with a dewlap and an ash barrel bonnet, and grinned at her. She hiccupped and looked at him with bleared eyes. His soul stirred in him. He opened his eyes and saw that the sky was blue; he saw the grass, the trees, the fountain; he perceived that it was spring. Slowly, deliberately, but with massive power, he clenched his fist, tightened his biceps, and bent his arm to prove his strength. Two hundred dollars coursed through his veins and he became a giant. Then he rose, swearing a new oath, and stepped off toward the Flatiron Building, giving the policeman a glowering look as he passed scornfully by.

He shouldered his way magnificently down the corridor, his shovel still in his clutch, and started to press into the elevator cage. A uniformed starter barred the way. The elevator boy grinned and snapped the door shut and shot up the shaft. Sheepishly shrinking back into his old humility, Haulick Smagg started to walk upstairs, since he was not good enough to be carried. His mind worked, but it was not till he had climbed nine stories that he had solved his new problem. Then, cursing himself volubly, he descended nine flights, took the starter by the shoulder and flung him the full length of the hallway, broke past the elevator boy and kicked him after the starter, then slammed the door shut and pulled the rope. The car shot upward. There was nothing sheepish about Smagg's grin now; it was victorious, arrogant, outright.

Before he knew it the car stopped with a crash; stopped automatically, but with violence. He wrenched the door open and emerged with his shovel and looked about him. By sheer good luck it was the seventeenth floor. He consulted his letter and began to circumnavigate the hallway, gazing at the numbers on the ground glass doors.

Here it was at last, 1798; and he stopped to wonder how he would get in. There was an electric button by the side of the door jamb, but it was too little for him to notice. He wanted a handle to pull or a stout oaken panel to bang. The glass gave him no chance, unless he boldly pushed his fist through it. He would have done that in another minute probably, had not the door suddenly opened of itself.

Two women appeared in the opening, one blonde, one brunette. At sight of him they ran shrieking inside. One tried to close the door, but Haulick Smagg's immense hoof was over the threshold and prevented. They retreated down the inner hall. The coal-heaver plowed his way after them. He lost them as they ran round a corner and disappeared into a little room; but he kept on toward a door at the end of the passage. There was no glass in the panel of this, and he pounded lustily with his shovel. In six seconds it was opened and flung wide.

II

FOR a second time Haulick Smagg was confronted by a lady, but she was no twin to Dolly Van Dream. Even Haulick Smagg apprehended a difference. This one was to the other what Christmas was to Election Day, what a cigarette was to a cigar, what dull red is to pale blue—no such denizen of the world as had walked offtime, tailor-fitted, across the outskirts of his inattention, or had ridden barouched and landaued, with pug dogs and uniformed slaves, along the avenues where he was wont to shovel coal. Unfamiliar as were the habits of Dolly

Van Dream to him, and as remote from his comprehension, she was as clear as beer compared with the sprite who now welcomed him with a fairy smile. The most he could be sure of was, that he *was* welcomed. The ray of delight she emanated bathed him and refreshed.

The lady has been already described with ambiguous tropes; but who can describe the impression she made upon the rods and cones of Haulick Smagg's retina, the wild attempts of Haulick Smagg's optic nerve to telegraph an impossible translation of the reaction to Haulick Smagg's poor brain? He saw, or thought he saw, or dreamed he saw, or, in some unique intoxication, saw, or felt, a creature all gray-and-silver shimmery, slenderly tender, mystic, wrapped in a perfumed mood—a smiling, feminine something that drew him as by a spell, and made him glad. Such a costume was as provocative to his imagination as such a face. He glowed and turned faint. There were jewels, too, upon that form; doll's hands and arms, a rapturous throat and neck and fragrant hair, all curls and billows. Slowly, one by one, the details came out of the mist of her presence. He swallowed his tobacco in his pleasant alarm. His shovel dropped upon the floor.

She greeted him as if he had been a long lost friend, or a rich uncle from Cambodia, dripping rubies. If there were symptoms of surprise they were hidden on the instant in the chime of her laughter. She laughed for a full minute by the clock, then reeled to a chair and laughed again. At last she rose with more dignity and held forth her hand.

"I'm delighted to see you," she said. "Do sit down and tell me your name. I presume you came in answer to my message."

"I came for that hundred dollars," said Haulick Smagg, and his voice growled and grumbled through the room.

She jumped up as if she had been touched off with a match, and exploded again into laughter. Then

from her escritoire she drew the missing portion of the bank note and tendered it.

He plucked it from her, scrutinized it, and matched it with the other half, which had lain hidden in his fist. A smile broke through the gloom of grime on his face, and the two fragments, reunited at last, were closed in upon by the fingers of his big right hand. From that moment, even to the end, the money never left his grasp.

She motioned him to a seat, straightened her face, and spoke to him. "Who are you, Vulcan?"

"Haulick Smagg. I'm a coal heaver. I worked for Blackstone and Company, but I was fired today. What do you want, anyway?"

"What do I want? I want you, blackamoor. Not till a minute ago did I know what I *did* want, but now I know."

Something of this got into the mire of his brain and stirred him; he rose, black and mighty, and lurched a few steps nearer her. She evaded him like a sunbeam and laughed again. "Sit down," she commanded, and a new note in her voice took away his strength. He dropped like a carcass into a chair.

"Let me think," she murmured. "It was my whim to play with Fate, to win Destiny to my side, to challenge Fortune rather than play my wit in my first encounter with this town. I sent my message to Chance and you were the answer, it seems." She looked at him from under her golden brows fixedly. "What do you mean, I wonder?"

"What d'you mean yourself?" He crossed his long legs.

She still stared at him and continued: "I take you, Caliban; I take you, shirt and shovel, cap and clumsiness, dirt, dust and cinders. No, I forswear the coal dust. I'll have you laundered." She rose and shook a finger at him. "And then, my Frankenstein, I'll make and model you—I'll tool you over and file you down, pump a soul into you, infuse you with fame. I'll finance and exploit you, and set

you walking up Broadway. Come, would you like to be reborn? Would you flower, monster? Would you cajole a metropolis?"

He looked awkwardly about him. "Got any beer?" he said.

She walked to a cabinet, took down a curious netted flask and poured a high-waisted glassful and handed it to him like Circe. It was down in an instant. He almost bit the glass, then smacked his lips and heaved a sigh.

Now she dared approach him, and her gaze was that of a snake.

"I have you!" she hissed. "Forget!" She extended her fore and little fingers.

There was no visible effect at first. His white eyeballs still roved the room. His tongue was still seen cuddling the roof of his mouth for the last flavor of the liquor; but as she stared at him he shrunk a little and his personality grew less insistent. He did not know yet that he was conquered, and tried at intervals to talk. But gradually peace enveloped him; his muscles relaxed, all but those that held his fingers tight about his fortune. With a gesture of sudden shame his greasy cap came off, his left hand awkwardly stroked his hair, he attempted furtively to kick his coal shovel out of sight.

The lady's gaze softened now, and she curled herself into a corner of a huge divan. She still watched him, but her curiosity seemed constructive, as if she trailed with his recreation. Her brows sprang in a tense arch; her forehead puckered; a smile came and went, evanescent; her nostrils dilated once in a while, as if impelled by some new, bolder whim.

"The land of possibilities," she murmured, "the city of solecisms. What path shall your feet tread, my amiable ogre? What walls shall you destroy for me, my battering ram? When you are painted and powdered, when you are frocked and finished, where shall I ride you roughshod? What prestige shall harness you where-with to haul my chariot? Oh, well, it suffices that the game is begun,

and you're my doll to dandle." She stretched herself and yawned. "Now for the christening!"

She went to the telephone.

"Send two big barbers from the eleventh floor," she commanded, "with soap and towels, razors, scissors, combs, a quart of violet water, and a ton of energy. I pay by the hour." She hung up and went back to the couch.

If Haulick Smagg was drunk, it was a new form of intoxication. Rather was it a dorming dream he was sunk in, or a manner of psychological enchantment. But the very air he breathed bewildered him. New sights dazzled him. The apparition on the couch seduced his mood. All had been strange since noon; all grew steadily stranger. He was off the earth now, without mental foothold, without experience, without knowledge of this quaint form of existence. It was easier not to think, not to wonder, not to look forward. He drifted as if in sleep, lulled, beatified, non-expectant, serene. Blackstone's coal yard receded toward infinity. Ten minutes before, his heaven lay in beer. He had reveled in the prospect of a ten days' carouse, of which the hundred-dollar bill in his hand was prophet. Even that joyous future now lost color and grew dim in this transcendent well-being; but he held to the money in his fist, nevertheless, though he cared little and less every moment whether or not that egg of hope ever hatched.

These hazy, inchoate speculations ceased suddenly at the entrance of two white-clothed barbers. He was fallen upon forthwith and dragged incontinently into the bathroom and ordered to strip.

He wondered vaguely where his will had gone, that he obeyed with such docility. A colloquy came to him through the keyhole, as his hostess gave her orders with precision. He had but time to hide his hundred dollars in his mouth when the room was filled with steam and flying spray; a torrent of waters hissed and bubbled; a warm, wet wave lapped his sticky skin; his eyes were full of soap; bare,

brawny arms brandished brushes; German exclamatives astounded his ears; his skin, lathered and scrubbed, grew smooth and slippery; his ears filled with water. It went on, seemingly for hours, bristles biting his head and legs and back. Then there came the sudden shock of an ice-cold flood freezing his flesh and he shrank under the ordeal. Next he was slapped and rubbed with towels, swaddled with soft linen. His skin tingled and glowed and a new life shot into him. It was pleasant now to feel the click of scissors in his hair, the smooth, sweet stroke of the razor on his cheek, the deft touches of the file and buffer on his nails. The odor of violets was fragrant about him, a conciliatory powder puff played gently over his chin. He grew young and younger, sweeter and more soft.

But through the flood and suds, the wiping and the polishing, still his mouth caged his bank note, a wad of wet paper. It prevented speech, but speech was unnecessary. The barbers worked upon him like sculptors on a block of marble, fashioning a man. Nor protestation nor entreaty could move them, and Haulick Smagg submitted to the inevitable.

When he was dry and shiny, his hair parted and his mustache curled, he was supported into an adjacent chamber, where, set out in orderly arrangement on the bed, new raiment awaited him. Underwear of hitherto unknown form and texture, hosiery of impossible sheen, neckwear of simple chastity, trousers, waistcoat and coat whose shape astonished him, all were hung and buttoned upon him. The process was long and intricate, but when Haulick Smagg, complete and *cap-à-pie*, approached a cheval glass with timorous apprehension, he met a stranger, resembling, to his mind, some plausible villain of some Bowery melodrama. That it was indeed he, himself, did not occur to him for several minutes. The image shocked him, and he turned away to accustom himself to strange weights and surfaces, tight feelings here and there in

zones that had all his life been free. There was a cool stiffness about his wrists, a brittle, crackling plane incasing his chest. His feet were bound with new stresses and new strains; his cheeks and chin felt naked; his pockets were all wrong and empty. Yet, strangely, he liked the sensation. Nothing about him reminded him of Haulick Smagg, but he felt a tolerant, friendly interest in himself, as in a stranger who might invite him, possibly, to take a drink. Thus amiably constrained, he was pushed by the two barbers into the reception room and left alone with his expectant hostess.

It is the test of excellency in any profession not to be branded by one's occupation so as to be infallibly recognized as of it. Haulick Smagg was too much of an artist in coal heaving to show, especially in his rehabilitation, the slightest trace of his trade. Lean and gaunt he was, with high cheek bones and smallish, violet eyes. His hands were large and bony, his feet long and wide. With the coal dust washed off, his face showed keenly alert, almost intelligent. When he smiled there was a charm about him like the charm of a child, compelling, irresistible. In short, as he stood there, immaculate and tailored, there was subtle evidence in his being of an inchoate personality that might prove susceptible and sensitive in its reaction upon environment.

Let us not scrutinize Lady Méchante's methods with her protégé too closely. How she wormed herself into his brain, tightened a screw here, strung a wire there, drove a few nails to hang thoughts on and installed a few primary principles of etiquette and culture, need not be disclosed. Scrub and shave a stevedore yourself, and you will find how amenable he is to formative processes when immaculate and rehabilitated. Lady Méchante was patient and persevering and inspired with a sense of humor. Her patient breathed pure oxygen in her presence, and was stimulated till he vibrated with overtones. So one may

string a cocoanut shell with catgut and a master's bow may call forth harmonies.

Rudiments of art and manners she taught him, primary working axioms, the maxims of the elect. Of Brahms, his architectural sonatas, of Chopin, the sentimentalist, of Cæsar Franck, of modern counterpoint and dissonance, the patter of the *cognoscenti*, the shibboleths of the inner few. So in music, so in art and literature; not many, but a well selected few, enough to carry him up the first flight of stairs in the abode of Esthetics.

But most of this came later. His first tuitions were more practical and utilitarian; a dash of persiflage, an epigram, a lively limerick or two and the art of complimenting a lady without having his face slapped came earlier in the game. He was taught to enter a room less like a giraffe than a gazelle. He was taught to leave it with a trail of fire. Not to be too interested nor too bored, to preserve the fine natural distinction of his personality—these and other graces she instilled in words of one syllable. In all this his fly-paper memory let no word escape. What he could not understand he learned by rote and practised like a machine; but no one would have known the difference.

How did she gain his complaisance? There was something of glamour, something of hypnotic suggestion in it. The exotic atmosphere induced a mood of dream. The novelty of his environment acted on him subtly like radium upon a diamond. His elements suffered allotropic modification. Not that he realized any of this. He was led like a steer to the butcher. He groped dimly forward as if through jelly. It was enough for him that evening that, though he was fed with strange viands at a little pink lit table and irrigated with rare vintages, at the end he still had his hundred-dollar bill, now not clutched in his horny palm, but safe ensconced in a corner of his white waistcoat pocket. His clothes upheld him with dignity like the armor of a knight. If Lady Méchante turned aside to giggle on occasion at his

legerdemain with knife or spoon, his jugglery with mushrooms, he did not perceive the cause. Once started on his career, his patience and willingness were pathetic.

She did not let him go, however, without a rehearsal of a dialogue that was to ensue upon the morrow. Already the story of his meeting with Miss Van Dream had been corkscrewed out of him between the fish and the entrée. Mr. Smagg, with his thick tongue loosened with Château Yquem '84, struggled valorously with a description of the girl till his hostess screamed with glee. She gleaned from the expected interview a hope of conquest. By that her scheme would be made easy; so Smagg was put through the paces he was to step at the studio in a polite dialogue fraught with a secret policy.

At midnight Haulick Smagg, still in evening clothes, still with a faint odor of violets upon him, descended the elevator of the Flatiron Building the bonded slave of my Lady Méchante. It was dangerous to let him loose to rove alone in search, perhaps, of his heaven of beer, but it could not be helped. Destiny had sent him; let Destiny guide him safe. His instructions, carefully written upon heliotrope notepaper, sent him across the street to the nearest hotel. This he entered and here he took a room. A half-hour later, Lady Méchante, her head out of her seventeenth-story window, questioning the night, imagined she could hear his snores.

III

HIGHBROW HALL is like a huge sponge, in whose multitudinous labyrinthine holes are housed the maddest cranks in the city of New York. It is the abode of a thousand freaks. There are over twelve hundred suites of apartments in this big, blond building, and each room contains an inmate insaner than the next.

A mass of intricate, hard paved, crosscut corridors and tunnels—twelve

stories of catacombs, covering heaven knows how many acres in extent. To traverse its mysterious halls and staircases is like threading the returning, elusive vagaries of a nightmare.

On such a journey many things happen. Here are doors upon which are painted the names of Miss Alicia Farboville and Mr. Ludwig Smith-Smith. A happy *ménage*, apparently, but is this quite proper? Shocked at the audacity, you look again and find that the two have different office hours, and merely share the studio in a Box and Cox arrangement. A door half open gives you a glimpse of the celebrated Pistachio Studios, all in melting green, from the velvet furniture to the hostess's vernal soul.

The halls are usually deserted, but not silent, for of a sudden, if it be Sunday morning, for instance, the whole fabric
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of oak bureaus whose drawers will not open. What economies are dovetailed into this pile! What illicit cuisines! What bathrooms made over into pantries or nurseries! Children? One sees them in the kindergarten on the ninth floor only. Their mothers are above in the gymnasium, taking lessons in golf. There are no homes in Highbrow Hall—only studios.

There are Schools of Dramatic Art, too; and the Women Journalists, where they read "papers," as women will, and discuss them over tea à la limonade. Here it is "sociable," thanks to the presence of men in bygone collars and white satin embroidered ties. Contributors, they, to the weeklies of the Middle West.

But we are not half down the corridor yet. We pass a few assorted poets, supported by wives who give "tells" at their own expense.

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ote the he true ae with usicale a secret remote. t set— th pre- ld only ve hun- tocratic e very, if not ew tim- ladies- ing in- cles of h one o, and gone.

Your host is the spoiled pet of the hour. You may be assured that the Buda-Pesth street ballad he exploits languidly, with naughty, half-shut eyes and alluring smile, is unspeakably *risqué*. Here Mrs. Munich, for whom every man in the room has a confessed *tendresse*, plays shivery Hungarian waltzes, retarding the time voluptuously with suggestive abandon, while you become hysterically confidential with your partner over the *marrons glacés*, and she, under the demoralizing influence of such fantastic harmonies, ventures to smoke half of a perfumed Petroff cigarette. Here reigns the *Efete*, where it is always the end of the century.

It was in such an exotic environment that Miss Dolly Van Dream's studio was placed, a secret nook at the end of a long tunnel-like corridor, up two steps and round a corner on the Seventh Avenue front. Within, one entered through a small hall to a sort of dining room, well stocked with old oaken furniture, whence one could see through a wide arch the vast two-story *atelier*.

The apartment was suspiciously commodious for the scant use Dolly made of it; but any such suspicions were vain. Dolly really painted; and that alone was crime enough to her world, for in the social structure of the town the Van Dreams dwelt very near the top. Not quite at the top, however, for their name permeated the society columns and Doolittle Van Dream was a millionaire, so called. There were those who questioned the "Van," and Doolittle's grandfather was said to have been a cabin boy. Their position, nevertheless, was what is called "assured," and Dolly, who had made a name for herself on account of the accidental surplus of brains accorded her, was looked upon only with tolerant amusement when she took up the artistic life. Dolly's fads were well known, and this was by no means her first. She had, in a way, taken her cue from Mrs. Braxton-Burlap, of Boston, and was a constant source of "copy" for the yellow journals. She was at present still famous

for having ventured alone into New York in August wearing a taupe veil. It was not the fact that she was unaccompanied or even the taupe veil that made the story; it was because there was nobody in New York except Dolly Van Dream and three or four millions of nameless ones. In virtue of these eccentricities she dwelt upon the borderland between Bohemia and Philistia; her studio was a sort of Debatable Ground where the guideboards pointed in both directions. Here were found both manners and customs, the one coming down from Society, the other coming up from Art. Here debutantes had shivered in the presence of genius, and genius had trembled at the proximity of wealth.

It was as near like the professional studio as Dolly could make it, the studio of the successful artist, the studio of a thousand amateur stories in the ten-cent magazines, with tapestries, old wooden carvings, embroidered altar cloths and all that sort of thing, you know. Dolly's canvases stood on the floor, turned face to the wall. Dolly's purchases in genuine Georgian frames, classic nudes and impressionist landscapes filled the vertical acreage.

It was the hour for tea and a precious poet or two, and perhaps a painter, in Dolly Van Dream's studio. A tremendous bang on the door startled the *tête-à-tête* at the tea table into a sharp surprise. Dolly stared and Dante Liliput stared, and the maid ran to the door. There was a colloquy of which only the bass half was heard; then a visitor tramped heavily through the dining room and appeared in the archway. Miss Van Dream rose, took a step forward and gazed with puzzled curiosity.

A frock suit and a pair of heavy boots came forward to meet her, propelled by a creature who seemed to have little part in them, so strangely they sat upon him. The man seemed reluctant, but the frock coat was perfectly willing and agreeable. The frock coat could not speak; neither, for a moment, could

Haulick Smagg, and Dolly Van Dream, absolutely at a loss to account for his presence, stood staring at him for a moment. She could not recognize him, of course; if he had brought his shovel with him, now, it might have been different. But at last she reached out a hand to him hesitantly and said: "Why—how do you do? How nice of you to come! You're just in time for tea."

"Thank you," said Mr. Smagg, and he wrung her hand with a terrible grip. Then he swallowed violently, turned his eyes to the wall, caught sight of the picture of a nude female with an orange and blushed.

This gave Dolly Van Dream no clue to his identity. She tried it again.

"It's a long time since I've seen you."

"Thank you. Didn't you want me to come? You said so yesterday."

It was now Dolly's turn to blush. She did it the more prettily.

"Yesterday?" she repeated.

His answer came as from an automaton, as he tried to remember Lady Méchante's phrases. His mind held fear at the strangeness of his situation, but its very difficulty prevented his collapse. He had a part to perform, and there was something in the will of the brute that urged him on, though it was like walking a tightrope in the dark. He groped mentally for his mistress's hand to guide him; mentally he shut his eyes and plodded dully forward, why he knew not, unless, indeed, it were for the hundred-dollar bill that Miss Van Dream had promised him and which he had promised not to accept.

"You gave me the torn hundred-dollar bill, you know, and the letter."

"Oh!" Dolly Van Dream looked at him with a new pair of eyes. "Really? Are *you* the man? Why, I thought—oh, I see! Something *did* happen, then?" She looked him up and she looked him down, while his eyes roved stealthily about the room.

"Thank you." He threw it at her, waiting for another cue.

"Do sit down and tell me all about it." Dolly pointed to a chair and to

the minor poet, then hesitated. "It's awkward, but I can't quite recall your name."

"Haulick Smagg." He dropped into the chair with a thud.

"Oh, Mr. Lilliput, let me present Mr. Smagg. He's just had a curious experience. Now do tell me about it, Mr. Smagg."

He shut his eyes in order to concentrate his attention and declaimed: "You thought I was a coal heaver. I am not a coal heaver. Sociologist. Studying the Submerged Tenth. Investigating the drinking habits of the lower classes. Collecting data for three years. My thesis for a doctor's degree. The lower classes attain their maximum capacity for alcoholic beverages on Tuesdays at 7.16 P.M. Minimum on Fridays at 3.05 A.M. I plot statistics collected by actual personal research. Diagrams, showing diurnal inebriety on cross-section paper, show hibacity curve of equation, $x^2 + y = 2G$. G is weekly income."

How relieved he was now he had got it out! He opened his eyes and looked about him. Dolly Van Dream was gazing wonderingly at him. Mr. Lilliput had his mouth open.

"What a splendid work!" she ejaculated. "Isn't it, Mr. Lilliput? Why, it ought to solve the whole drink problem, surely! But I confess I can't quite see yet how the theory can be applied."

"Applied" was his cue for something—but what? He had forgotten, but he made a brave attempt. "Only an advertising scheme," he ventured.

Now this was the answer to a wholly different question, as he perceived dimly by Miss Van Dream's expression. He was quite over his head now and struggled madly. "It is quite natural that you should be amazed," he brought out, a remark which should have come earlier in the conversation.

Dolly was indubitably amazed, and her curiosity was still unsatisfied. "But what happened in the Flatiron Building?" she inquired.

"The collection of statistics and plotting of tendency curves is an end,

not a means, in the science of sociology. Ten diagrams make one doctor's degree." He looked up in triumph. What if he had his replies mixed? His gipsy memory had not failed in his phrasing.

Mr. Lilliput was obviously impressed. "I say," he exclaimed, "you ought to get a jolly good lot of material down there. Human nature in the rough and all that sort of thing. I never saw a drunken man in my life!"

Dolly pieced it out to suit herself. "So you were really in disguise yesterday?" she said. "How interesting and romantic! But did you get the other half of the hundred-dollar bill? Do tell me just what happened."

"New brand of soap. They wanted a name. I told 'em, 'Latherine.'"

"Oh, I see." Dolly sighed.

"Advertising writers and press agents are the only romanticists left nowadays," Mr. Lilliput remarked blandly. "The only fairy tales we have have patent medicines and actresses for their heroines."

Haulick Smagg reached for a piece of toast on the tea table and crammed it into his mouth. It recalled Dolly to the amenities.

"Oh, do have some tea, Mr. Smagg. Perhaps I should call you Professor." She poured him out a cup.

"I got the hundred dollars," he said, chewing his toast. "I'm going to give it to the poor." Which was, so far, his first original venture, and in it showed the cunning of the primitive man. "*I got that hundred dollars*," he repeated meaningly, a little louder.

"Oh, I quite forgot! I promised you a hundred myself." Dolly jumped up and sought her purse on the shelf of a great easel. Then she turned toward him hesitatingly. "Of course I thought you were really a coal heaver yesterday, or I wouldn't have insulted you by offering it. I hardly dare do so now."

"For the poor," he reiterated, and held out his great hand.

She handed the yellow bill to him with admiration. "So you are a philanthropist as well!" she said.

He crowded the money into his waistcoat pocket, then stretched out his hand for the cup of tea, but so clumsily that it fell to the floor with a crash. With an oath he brought the sole of his boot savagely down upon the fragments, crushing them to morsels. His manner was as wanton as if he were stamping upon a beetle.

Dolly Van Dream turned white and the minor poet's eyebrows rose, shocked at an expression of real emotion. But Haulick Smagg, having vented his wrath, grew mild again. He took the second cup of tea which Dolly poured for him hurriedly, emptied it into his saucer and gulped it down audibly. Then, infused with strength and courage, he looked about him. Singling out a landscape, an impressionistic mosaic of colored dabs, he thrust out his thumb and wiggled it with a technical gesture.

"Lot of bully good stuff in that," he said with a magnificent effect of sagacity. "I like this part in here." His thumb described a small semicircle. "A bit tricky, though."

This reinstated him. "I'm so glad you like it," said Dolly. "You really are discriminating. I hardly dare to show you my own work, but I *would* like your opinion. Do tell me what you think of this. It's only a study, you know. Tell me frankly." She turned over a canvas, showing in bold vigorous brush work the half-done head and shoulders of a silk-clad girl.

He stared at it and clutched his chin with his fist. What was it Lady Méchante had said? There was a master key she had given him by which he might pick the lock of any social dilemma. Oh, yes! "There was once a fox," he began slowly, wagging his head.

"Oh, if it's as bad as that, for heaven's sake don't tell me!" Quickly she turned the canvas about. "My, you *are* shrewd! You have discovered the very thing! I knew it all along, of course, and it is just because I *did* know it I wanted to be told it wasn't so."

Dante Lilliput sat up and took notice.

One could almost see him scribbling something down in a little notebook for future use.

As for Haulick Smagg, he was profoundly satisfied with himself. He was dabbling in magic. He understood it not one whit, but his power was pleasant. This little victory gave him the nerve to walk up and boldly inspect the nudes, something he had wanted to do ever since he entered the apartment. A glance back over his shoulder showed him that even this was permissible. He ranged from one to another, then reluctantly examined a piece of still life representing a dead fish, a dozen onions and two dishpans. There was one last remark in his catalogue. He recalled that it had to be effected with his hands in his pockets and his head on one side. He assumed the attitude and risked it.

"Good," he said, "but why do it?"

He scored a bullseye. "You *terrible* man!" said Dolly Van Dream. "You know everything! Now do come back and be sociable, before you destroy everything in my studio. Mr. Lilliput was just going to read me one of his poems."

Smagg made for his chair, and, dazed with his success so far, could not resist the temptation to try another of the formulas he had rehearsed with his tutor. Three or four remarks about pictures she had taught him, one or two on music and architecture. What was that about poetry? "The worst thing about blank verse is that it's usually so damned blank."

He tried it. Trite as it was, it had been funny before often enough, and might be again, as Lady Méchante knew. But this time its only apparent effect was to make the minor poet jam his manuscript back into his pocket and change it for another.

"You are terribly modern, Mr. Smagg," said Dolly. "Haven't you any room for the classic in your soul? Mr. Lilliput is of the neo-Greek school."

"I *am* the neo-Greek school!" said Dante Lilliput. "I stand for the voluptuousness of sound, for colored

words and phrases, for perfumed cadences and the mellifluous consecration of vowels."

"Let me feel your muscle," said Smagg, starting to his feet. He reached out a paw and gripped the biceps of the minor poet till he drew forth a stifled shriek. "Go on!" he muttered. "You ain't got no more than a cockroach. Look at this!" He took a fork in one hand and bent it till it looked like a sugar tongs, then tossed it through the archway. Then suddenly he wished he had not done it, and he grinned silyly. Lady Méchante's invisible finger beckoned him to safety.

"Miss Van Dream," he said, "I have associated so long with the lower classes that really I have forgotten how to behave. I beg your pardon."

Again the spell worked and the effect steadied him. He was, during the whole call, like a somnambulist traversing a perilous path, now hypnotically sure of his footing, now suddenly awakening to a cognizance of dizzy heights. So he changed from moods of security to sudden embarrassments and fears. His first essays at repartee had been timorously delivered, but he grew to an increasing faith in the counsels of his mistress. He felt dimly that his security lay in a blind acquiescence to her *dicta*, to say nothing original, to watch for his cue. Yet, from time to time, the natural man asserted himself and his spirit broke loose.

Now, while the others took up the thread of their lost conversation, he composed himself to a passive role and studied the mild, sane tonalities of the academic oils about him. Work like this he had seen often enough hung over glittering bars, lithographed on calendars, pasted on the sides of tomato tins, man's feeble attempt to impress the retina as nature itself impresses it; to do, many, many degrees below in tone, what the sunlight did. He saw the attempts to capture the transitory effect of things, accidental illuminations whose shadows and half-lights concealed or distorted the actual form, the immemorial scholastic attempt to reproduce mere charm. Every painting

presented a petty, subjective point of view, pictured in heavy pigment, each one a deification of the casual, the obvious, the temporary. All this he saw, but, seeing, did not yet understand. He accepted it as right and proper in its correlation with the unknown qualities of an unknown culture. He accepted it as he had accepted his frock coat. That was the consistent costume, these the consistent properties and scenery for the undreamed of drama in which he figured. He was still in the dark, but when the light began to come to him he was to perceive new ideas as a babe sees new objects, without perspective or distance or size. What was near to him now seemed big and potent.

Dante Lilliput had drawn a typewritten manuscript from his pocket, and, urged by Dolly Van Dream's honeyed compliments, had begun to read. His voice flowed evenly; the drawn out vowels were given quantity rather than accent; the lines were intoned monotonously with deep intensity, as if each word were displayed and valued, a jewel upon a necklace:

"Last night I slept with Rhodomonte,
With Rhodomonte the fair, and she was
dead!
Cold were her breasts
As last year's nests,
And weary, weary hung her tired head.
How should I know that Rhodomonte
was dead?
Was she more cold
Than e'er of old?
Was she more languid than when oft I
said,
'God, how I love you, Rhodomonte!'
Last night I slew my Rhodomonte,
Slew Rhodomonte the fair,
And she is dead!"

Dolly Van Dream jumped to her feet. "Splendid!" she cried. "What power, what feeling, what daring! Ah, that is poetry, indeed, is it not, Mr. Smagg?"

Mr. Smagg had, during the recitation, succeeded in catching a fly in his fist and was now busy pulling off its wings. He looked up guiltily and sought in his phrase book.

"Take care of the sounds, and the sense will take care of itself," said

Alice." He feared he had got it backwards, but it was too late.

"My theory exactly," said Dante Lilliput. "Take care of the passion and the person will take care of herself, too."

"Yes," sighed Miss Van Dream. "One's person doesn't matter. It's a wonderful piece of symbolism, I think. Rhodomonte! How well I know her, how well we *all* know her, everyone who has lived and loved!"

"And left," added Lilliput. Then he let himself go. "Oh, there's nothing worth writing about but love. I love love! It's the greatest of all the arts. It is as necessary to a man of genius as fuel is to a fire. What could I do without women, or what could women do without me? Do you know, there's one curious district in this city like a little foreign island where I don't know a single woman! It is between Seventy-second Street and Seventy-ninth, west of Broadway. On West Seventy-first Street there's a girl named Rose who is a perfect violet. On Eightieth Street there's a girl named Violet who is a perfect rose. But between the two there's a vast, arid waste where not a woman knows me, where not a woman loves me! Oh, I never dine alone. There's always some fresh young thing who loves to look at me and hear my voice."

"You do read your poems very well," said Dolly.

"Oh, I can't do them justice unless I'm holding a girl's hand. If you would let me hold your hand, now, I'll recite my 'Abnegation.' I always need a woman's hand to sustain me and give me magnetism. I need sympathy. I need the tremor of the soul, you know—the polarity of sex."

He reached forward and took her hand in his velvet grasp, rubbing his thumb along the back of her hand as he recited with vibrant, suppressed passion:

"Sweet! If thy feet
Trample my bosom in scornfulness,
Why should my mournfulness
Teach me deceit?"

"Pure! As the starlight is sure,
My love would accept thy duplicity,
Faint with felicity
So to endure!"

"It really does thrill me," sighed Dolly. "Why, I can feel it pulsing in my finger tips as you speak. How one gets your heartbeats!"

"God!" cried Smagg, jumping up. "God! I'm sick. Sick as a horse." He laid his tremendous hand against his stomach and his eyes rolled up.

"What's the matter? Don't you like it?" the poet asked stiffly.

"It's that damn drink there. I ain't used to swallowing slops like that."

"Would you like a little Scotch?" Dolly asked.

"Huh?"

"I have some Scotch whisky here."

"God, have you?" The very word restored him, and he looked wistfully about. Miss Van Dream rose and sought the decanter. He grabbed it from her, doused out a tall glassful and poured it into his mouth. Then he wiped his lips with the back of his hand and gave a satisfied grunt, while the liquor stung its way down his alimentary canal and tore at his vitals. He looked proudly about the room for a while, then his gaze centered upon Dante Lilliput.

"Put that man out!" he thundered. "I want to talk to you. I like you, but I ain't got no use for a cockroach!"

Miss Dolly Van Dream had backed to the other side of the table, and now her voice came proud but tremulous. "Mr. Smagg," she said, "I can't stand this exhibition, really. I'm sorry, but I'll have to ask you to leave if you can't contain yourself."

A thin, small memory of Lady Méchante managed to reach his brain, and he keyed down a little. "Miss Van Dream," he said, "I have 'sociated s'long with the lower classes—really forgot how to behave. Beg y' pardon."

"Oh, it's all right; don't apologize, I beg of you!" Miss Van Dream came out from behind the table.

Mr. Lilliput rose and spoke suavely.

"The scientific mind, I suppose, is apt to find the poetic temperament heretical. I can quite understand, Mr. Smagg, how—"

"Mister yourself!" He bellowed it forth. The wire of his psychic telephone with the Fairy of the Flatiron was now rent asunder. "I'm going to go over there and step on you, you rocking horse!"

At this Dolly displayed a sudden unwonted energy and proved herself a Van Dream. She spoke deliberately. "I must positively ask you to leave us now, Mr. Smagg!" was her dictum.

He wheeled on her like a thirteen-inch gun. "Gimme my hat!" he said. She drew herself up proudly.

"Gimme my hat!"

She wilted and cowered. Then she reached under his chair, took his silk hat and gave it to him abjectly. Dante Lilliput turned the pages of a little book nervously, and made himself small by the window.

"Gimme my stick!"

She waited on him, her eyes fixed on his; though, strangely enough, in hers there was no symptom of fear.

Mr. Smagg fished a pair of yellow gloves from his hip pocket and dipped his hands into them, dragged them over his fingers and jammed in his thumbs.

"I have to thank you for a very pleasant time, Miss Van Dream."

Mr. Smagg tramped out of the room, opened the door and slammed it behind him. The walls shook with the concussion.

IV

SHE has been called, heretofore, Lady Méchante, apparently in a spirit of jest, even as she herself once adopted the name of Madeleine Mischief. But, and may it not prejudice you against her, a lady she was in very sooth, and hight Méchante. She has been seen before this working overtime in social harness in Mayfair. She has been seen in her dramatic exit from the dinner table of Madame Qui Vive. This was interregnum, to be sure; but she had

her rights, her styles and her privileges in that high world as the wife of Lord Méchante, her first husband, a certain Baron of Bayswater, who had achieved importance in the later Victorian Beerage for his movement toward the abolition of the British barmaid. It need hardly be added that he was unpopular, although his lady suffered no loss of prestige. Even the hospitals he had founded repudiated him. Ostracized by the hideous violence he had done to public opinion, he died soon afterwards, and his widow followed him into obscurity on account of her romantic attachment for Leopold Gaillarde, a picturesque burglar, whose fingers were better developed than his brain.

Mrs. Gaillarde, who had an infinite capacity for being bored, and a still greater facility for rescuing herself from such dilemmas, had not poisoned Leopold, however near she may have come to it in that first year after marriage which is said to be a purgatory of marital adjustments. She had never adjusted herself; the process was rendered unnecessary by Leopold's encounter with a policeman named Slithery, who emptied four bullets into the burglar's stomach. Leopold never digested the pellets, and, four days afterwards, Mrs. Gaillarde was a widow. She bobbed up merrily at Madame Qui Vive's under her precious title, and said nothing of her second experience in matrimony.

The dainty coronet upon the side of her six-cylinder Pancake car, therefore, was in a way justified. She was, it is true, a good deal more proud of her extra attachable wheel, her electric horn and several shiny brass attachments on the dashboard. Yet the insignia, with its motto, "Why not?" was placed there for a reason. Every afternoon at four found Lady Méchante in a black and white double veil and an oleander princess gown at the sportily whipped steering wheel of her racing runabout, a long, low, lead-colored craft with a wicked, raking running board that made it look like a torpedo destroyer. It was a car any traffic

officer might be excused for arresting on sight. As it crept up Fifth Avenue, still as a mouse, at six miles an hour, it seemed to be doing twenty-three, at least. When she opened the throttle on Riverdale Avenue, it went up the oily, heart-breaking hill like butter sliding off a hot plate. But Lady Méchante was seldom arrested; her eyes prevented. Hats came off and apologies were offered on occasion, and the officers forgot her number.

There was one number, however, that Lady Méchante herself did not forget; it was 38,002. This registered, as she had taken pains to discover, a thirty horse power Hustler belonging to Wrestling Brewster Bradford of No. 3 Madison Avenue. She was going to play with Wrestling Brewster Bradford, and play hard. She had picked him as an American of the Americans, Boston born but New York bred. Her delectable coal heaver was not to absorb her whole energy. She intended to use them both; the contrast appealed exquisitely to her.

For this reason she patrolled Madison Avenue and corrupted the floorman of her Thirty-second Street garage, questing her prey. Sometimes, as she was directing the change of a spark plug, Mr. Bradford would come in and go out with his car, the Hustler with a toy tonneau, which he was old-fashioned enough sometimes to drive himself. Then down went the hood of the Pancake and it was snapped and strapped; up went the chauffeuse into the low seat, and she was out and after him as stealthily as a gray snake.

Many such pursuits were made in vain; she escaped his notice usually, but he afforded her no opportunity for the achievement of her plot. His visits to his publishers and to magazine editors and the like kept her in the heart of the traffic, where the going was slow. She encountered him occasionally in the Park or on Riverside Drive, but here there was as little chance. She needed an empty road for immunity.

So she stalked her quarry for a week without avail. On the nineteenth of

April she discovered him in the Hustler, which was decorated with a small American flag in honor of the shot that was heard around the world. This was at five o'clock, hard by Grant's Tomb. No. 38,002 swept by her, going down hill under the guidance this time of a leather-clad chauffeur. Lady Méchante turned immediately in a great curve and was after him. Across the Viaduct she purred along, three lengths behind. Bradford looked back once. Lady Méchante smiled. Over the Dam and out Jerome Avenue she trailed them, then leftward into Van Cortlandt Park. Here after a little they passed the lake, and the road ran up and down hill in sinuous curves. Lady Méchante dropped a rod or so behind, and a little "V" was printed on her brow.

At the top of a long, winding slope she opened her throttle wide for a quarter of a minute, then jammed it back and released the clutch. The machine jumped forward like an unhooded falcon and sailed after the Bradford car, as silent as the wind. Her foot was steady on the brake as she drew near. At ten feet distance she jammed it hard enough to check her momentum a little; then, dodging around the steering wheel to escape the shock of it, she sent her right mudguard into the tail lamp of the car in front. The mudguard buckled, and her forward spring crashed into his body. Her car slued suddenly and nearly went over. She had just time to shriek beautifully and fall half out of the car.

It was a great success. When Bradford, with white cheeks, reached her pink ones, her eyes were shut, one arm hung limp, one hand clutched her heart. The chauffeur came hurrying up.

Luckily they were mere men. Had Bradford's sister been there, or any other woman, she would have understood the situation perfectly. Whether the accident were genuine or not, the lady's pose was theatrical. Any woman would have said that, for the audience, nothing could have been more effective than the tangle of hair Lady

Méchante had contrived to dislodge. Her display of hosiery, considering the few seconds in which she had to accomplish it, was nicely calculated between revelation and suggestion. True, she was not quite white enough, though she was holding her breath resolutely. Her eyelids were not quite inert, though they showed her lashes to good advantage. But there was no fault to be found with her entrancing, half-open mouth, showing, nestling between her white teeth, her little pointed tongue. It takes skill to stage-manage such a scheme, to be shot out of a catapult, so to speak, and fall into a graceful tableau.

Suffice it to say that the tableau was not lost on Wrestling Brewster Bradford, nor even on his chauffeur. It received a moment's hushed pause in tribute of its beauty before even horror could assert itself. Horror did, however, with several "My God's" for its reward. Then Bradford and his man, in an agony of fear and ignorance, raised the beauteous victim in their arms and laid her upon the grass beside the road. As they were too timorous to feel of her to ascertain the quality of her injuries, Lady Méchante paid them out in suspense, and the two wretched men, knowing they ought to do something, but not knowing what to do, nor how to do it if they had, gazed down on her as at a wounded butterfly. Then Bradford dropped on his creased knees to fan her with his cap, and his mechanician was dispatched for water.

Not a second too long, not a second too short, was the time Lady Méchante accorded for the anguish. Then she fluttered her eyelids, quivered her lips and looked up at him as a babe looks up for milk. Bradford's relief was written in his face.

"Are you hurt?" he demanded huskily.

She noticed with delight that his hand trembled, that already drops of sweat had gathered on his forehead. Perhaps that was why she smiled. "What happened?" she inquired faintly.

"You ran into me. I think your brake must have failed, or something. Do see if you're hurt anywhere, please. My God! I hope we haven't broken any bones! I'd never forgive myself."

"It was my fault," she murmured, and closed her eyes again.

"Won't you see if you can't get up?" he insisted gently. "It's terrible to see you lying there that way."

"Is it?" she said, opening her eyes and smiling mischievously.

"Oh—I didn't mean *that!* You're so beautiful, indeed, that I can't bear to think of your being hurt. Do see if you can rise."

She did not immediately, for she had not yet decided just where to be hurt. Certainly her ankle should be strained in order to enlist proper physical support, but she must not overdo the thing or make her injuries too specific, on account of a possible doctor, though she was not afraid of doctors either. So she first let loose a little "Oh!" as she drew up her knee. Then she shook a white hand stiffly and knotted her brows into a frown. Her smile came heroic now, and she played the Spartan.

"Oh, it's nothing at all much. I guess I'm all right, but I'm afraid I can't drive my car home. By the way, is there anything left of it?"

Bradford glanced back at the road.

"I don't know," he said. "It looks a little ragged, but don't worry. I'll attend to it. You mustn't think of going home alone, anyway. I'll see you're taken care of."

"It's my ankle," she said wearily, and she made a wry little mouth. "Now if you'll give me your hand I'll try to get up."

He drew her up tenderly, only to find she could not set the right foot to the ground. Coyly she looked at him; timidly she consented to put her arm about his neck, to have him put his arm about her waist, her little waist, her little oleander waist. Bradford could feel her tremble; indeed, she could feel him tremble, too. She knew her business, the little scamp, this pretty liar. Couldn't she manage to

make him carry her? she wondered. She might have, had not the chauffeur come back, on the run, with a canvas bucket of slopping water and eyes like an owl's. Catching sight of the interesting composition of the picture, he set down the bucket, backed off and began to inspect the machines.

Bradford and his charge sat down again on the bank. "I'll be all right in a minute," she said. "Let me rest a little." That minute she proposed to spend in studying the young man she had trapped.

He had a head like Seneca—or was it Erasmus? Rough-hewn, yet with subtle planes—a head any portrait painter would tell you was hard to draw, and prove it. Cynicism and kindness were in his mouth, but mostly cynicism. His eyes were thinking eyes—brook hazel. It was a face most women were afraid of, but not so Lady Méchante. She saw the difference between his two lips and played for the more sensitive and sensuous lower one. Nor was she afraid of the cynicism. New York had rubbed off on him, that was all; at the bottom all was Boston enough still. Seven generations of Mayflower stock were behind him, she knew, bred in-and-in. It gave him a sharp individuality. His hands, she noticed, were square. He would not be easily fooled; still, it was lucky for her they were not conic.

"I'm not badly hurt," she said, "except that my ankle seems to be twisted. I got off easy. It's a good job I didn't plow right through you. I thought I was going to. Will they take away my license?" She looked up at him with a fifteen-year-old expression. "Are you going to sue me for damages? I fancy I scratched you up a bit."

"Oh, don't think of that. I think your car got rather the worst of it." He called to his chauffeur. "How did they stand it?"

"Not bad. Crumpled up a little in front—that's all. If I hadn't slowed up when I saw her coming it wouldn't have amounted to anything at all." He turned discreetly away.

"I'll give you my name in case you

want to have me arrested. You'd better take my number to be sure I'm not fooling you."

He laughed as he took the card she produced from a small red purse, then raised his eyebrows as he read the legend. She noticed it and snatched it away from him.

"I beg your pardon," she exclaimed. "I gave you the wrong one. I'm not using my title here in America." The card she now handed him bore the name, "Mrs. Nelly Hellysh."

"My name is Bradford," he remarked, looking at her. "Wrestling Brewster Bradford."

"Wrestling? What an odd name!"

"I was named for an ancestor of mine. It was originally Wrestling-with-the-Lord-in-prayer Brewster. He was the son of the original Elder Brewster, the Pilgrim, you know."

"My! You *are* blue-blooded, aren't you? Fancy knowing who your ancestors were! I can't remember further back than my grandfather, and he was only an earl. I'm quite afraid of you!"

"Oh, ancestry is nothing; it's the man that counts," said Bradford modestly.

She sat up now with animation. "But I suppose you're all sorts of things besides, aren't you? Of course you belong to the Scions of Shay's Rebellion?"

"Oh, yes."

"And the Descendants of the Colonial Skirmishes?"

"Of course, and many others. All of them, in fact."

"To think I dared run into you with my car! Why, I'll be colliding with the President of the United States yet! But I did get jolly well paid out for it, didn't I?" She caressed her silken ankle with a dismal smile.

"You must let me take you home now, or to a doctor's, before it grows any worse."

"Well, if you don't mind. I'm afraid, really, I can't manage that clutch."

He called to his chauffeur to help him support her, and they lifted her

into the seat. A few explanations as to the control of her car, and he started off, followed by the Hustler.

On the way back he gave her many a side glance, and usually caught her looking at him. When Lady Méchante looked like that something had to ache before long. The machine was too new to him, however, for him to give her much attention or much talk, and she subsided into silence as well, but her silence was quick with electricity. He could feel her when he did not see her. The vibrations of her presence kept him in a mild excitement, like a low fever coursing in his veins.

With his chauffeur he assisted her into the Flatiron Building, up the elevator and to her rooms without remark as to their extraordinary location. Here he left her, with a request to be permitted to call on the morrow to see how she had fared.

That she would fare well enough he might have found out if he could have seen her through the keyhole after he left. She walked spryly enough then, and made first for the mirror to estimate the impression she might have made. She seemed satisfied, for she blew a kiss at her reflection before she rang for her maid.

V

THE immediate result of the tempest in the tea party where Haulick Smagg had taken his initial plunge into society was an invitation to call on upper Fifth Avenue for Miss Van Dream's "at home." It was evident that she had found him amusing, and she, as no one else in her world, could afford to patronize him.

Lady Méchante smiled when he brought her the news. It was evident that her protégé was to be a success. At the story of his atavism she had been a little fearful whether he might not overdo the part; and, to prevent the recurrence of such psychoses, she pledged him to forswear such vulgar stimulants as might reawaken his mind

to his former pursuits of pleasure. Champagne, she had already found, he could be safely trusted with. It merely sent him to a bizarre heaven where he communed with angels and wore strange robes of light and glory. Beer dashed him to the earth with a thump.

However, if Mr. Smagg was to go to the Van Dreams', Lady Méchante must go, too. She was by no means that kind of a practical joker who sends things by mail and never witnesses the effect. No, she must see him in all his glory and his light; she must watch her Wooden Horse make his entry into the City of Solecisms, and watch from inside. As Frankenstein played with his monster, so she would play with hers. True, Frankenstein's monster had destroyed him, but then Frankenstein had been a German. There was nothing German about Lady Méchante; she came from the dark side of the moon; her blood ran quicksilver, not beer.

How, then, to get to Dolly Van Dream's? She communed with herself in the glass. Surely they would not put her out. She would simply go, and be done with it. She had seen hostesses before disguise their lack of memory by a fulsome welcome; she had done it herself often enough in the old days in Mayfair, where all men looked alike, all women talked alike and none was wanted anyway. Dolly Van Dream would without doubt pretend to recognize her and be exuberant. Trust Lady Méchante for the rest. Besides, the Van Dreams had been in London for the season some years ago. She would work Smagg in, too—then turn loose and dazzle them.

Haulick Smagg, his two hundred dollars still unspent—for his lady paid his bills—had come back and back for further tutelage. He was well through his table manners now. He could blow his nose lightly and almost with charm, saving the back of his hand for other uses. His tread was less rhinoceros-like. She had him into corsets and gave him a genteel figure. His profanity was pruned down to

milder expletives. He was taught to say nothing at all if he could help it, save sentences from her phrase book. To teach him to contemplate ladies in décolleté without obvious wonder and delight was harder. In short, some of Smagg's corners and edges had already been blunted, and he moved among his fellows with less friction. From being totally without sight in the life social, he was now only purblind, dimly seeing his way, though still holding her hand.

"This is a mere game of follow-your-leader," she said to him. "You must watch like a monkey and do the same as they do, so far as mere habits are concerned. After that, you must do everything differently; scorn everything they praise and praise everything they scorn."

He did not quite understand it yet, but the game pleased him. Paupers have played at being princes before, and Smagg, as the Sleeper Awakened, rose mightily to grasp the situation. He was avid for instruction. She tried to impress upon him that women were alike in her world as in his, but it took some time for him to believe it. When she advised him to be familiar with old ladies and serious with young girls, to be *risqué* with prudes and proper with an easier sort, he gaped at her and wondered that such things might be. But he had the goddess Minerva for his mentor and she could not err.

From her cab window she saw him enter the Fifth Avenue chateau, to be swallowed up by French renaissance. Five minutes afterwards she was at the same portal, which was opened by the same striped waistcoat. She breathed the name of Hellysh; the butler took it up and shot it into the salon. Dolly Van Dream looked up with a puzzled expression and came a couple of steps forward with a set smile and an outstretched hand. Her greeting was, as Lady Méchante had expected, without trace of embarrassment. She even kissed both of Lady Méchante's pink cheeks. She held her hand long and affectionately, reproaching her for not

having come before. At this moment Haulick Smagg reinforced them.

"My dear Lady Méchante, how awfully jolly to see you again! I had no idea you were in New York!"

Dolly's glance became more intelligent. The word "Lady" rang in her ears with a pleasant sound; but Lady Méchante put her forefinger to her lips and frowned deliciously. "Oh, don't call me that here, Mr. Smagg. I've dropped my title since I came to America. It's too perfectly absurd to expect that here in a democracy. Mrs. Hellysh, please, remember. I prefer it, really."

Then she turned to Dolly. "It seems positively *years* since I met you, my dear. Where was it? At Lord Sud-denleigh's? Or was it at that very naughty place in Surrey? I was so madly in love that I don't remember, except that I believe I was very jealous of you. You'll forgive me, won't you? Well, I said I'd come, and I have come, and it's awfully decent of you to want me, only don't breathe a word about who I am, if you don't mind. Just let me be plain Mrs. Hellysh, though you may call me Nelly, if you like. Now I hope you've got some nice men here and some good strong tea. I'll have the tea first, please." And, as she walked away, she whispered to Dolly: "Isn't Mr. Smagg a *dear*? I'm just crazy about him. You're in great luck to get him. He doesn't go everywhere. I'm afraid we are going to be rivals again." And she was off to the tea table after a quick introduction to Mrs. Van Dream. She towed Haulick Smagg in her wake.

After she had sipped her first cup of tea she sent him forth, errant, to break a few lances, and watched him, cat-like, from her corner. Men came up and talked and stayed and stayed and talked. Lady Méchante, rallying them, volleying them, flattering or cajoling them, still kept an eye and an ear alert for Smagg.

He stood with both hands behind his back, now, deep in conversation with a jet-clad dowager. "Opera!" His voice was deep with scorn. "It's the

most ridiculous and inane exhibition known to modern civilization! It's nothing but an expensive noise made by fat German women in thick velvet clothes."

"You don't like music, then?" she said timidly.

"I don't like damn fools," he said. "I don't want my music to come out of a pasteboard dragon or cloth trees. I'm *too* fond of music to like the Opera." Then he lowered his voice. "Say, they got anything to drink here?"

She chuckled amiably. "How amusing you are, Mr. Smagg! You *must* come and see me. Here's my daughter. Mr. Smagg, Emily. Emily's wild about artists, Mr. Smagg. All the time she can spare from bridge and golf and dances she spends down at Dolly Van Dream's studio. Isn't it wonderful, Dolly's energy? I don't see how she ever gets up in time to paint by daylight."

"I hear you are a great art critic, Mr. Smagg," said Emily.

"I try to strike the modern note," was his grave reply.

"I suppose it is something awfully wicked," said Emily. "Mamma, you go along and have some tea and let Mr. Smagg tell me about it."

He looked down at her and perceived that she was young and slim and pretty. His blood stirred in him. "You've got awfully small hands," he said. "Let's see 'em."

She held out her little hand and he grabbed it, squeezing it till her rings cut into her fingers and the tears started to her eyes. Then he let it go, satisfied.

"Oh, Mr. Smagg," she faltered, "there's something so awfully big and strong about you! I can't tell you how I admire you. I think you understand me." And she cast down her eyes in confusion.

Just then he caught Lady Méchante's eye. "Oh, women understand one another, but they never understand themselves," he stammered. "Did I hurt you?"

"Of course you did. You're the only man I ever met who ever dared to.

It was wonderful! Why, the men in my set would no more dare to strike a woman than they would ride a bicycle up Fifth Avenue! I really think you would do it. You are so different, and everything. I don't see how you can do it and still not wear funny collars, or anything."

"You never can tell what you can do till you stop trying," he said, and wondered to see her giggle. He said it with just the proper amount of distracted attention, because his eyes had become fascinated by a glittering diamond pin at Emily's throat. But, perceiving that he had pleased, he ventured to reach forth his hand and say:

"Gimme that thing, will you? I want it."

"You adorable man!" Emily unfastened the pin and handed it to him. After he had looked at it for a minute, he dropped it into the tail pocket of his coat, turned suddenly away and left her staring.

A lady seated in a gold chair interfering with his progress through the room, he put his foot on the rung of the chair and shoved it, with its occupant, out of his way. He elbowed between two black coats, walked across several lacy trains and took Lady Méchante by the arm. She pinched him well for it.

"Do I do it all right?" he asked. "It seems to go slick enough."

"Oh, you'll never get on this way," she said. "You are too slick altogether. You've got to bully them if you want to make a success. It looks as if you were just trying to be agreeable. Remember what I told you. You have to go either saddled and bridled, or booted and spurred. Drive them, incubus, drive them! Make them afraid of you! Shoot a little fire or I'll perish of ennui. Do you think I took the trouble to come here to see you tamed? Make them jump through the hoop; crack your whip; bark, ring-master."

She turned to her neighbor. "Why, of course. It's absurd to say that Society in America is not so refined and well bred and well organized as it is

abroad. I don't see any difference. You say the same things as we do, whatever you think. You worship the inconspicuous and the unoriginal. Why, look at this delightful Mr. Smagg. Of course he's an intellectual type. He has all the modern point of view as a thorough man of the world, but he is a gentleman through and through, such as you might find in the highest circles of English Society. In point of fact, I did find him there, at the Bishop of Shoreditch's, and he was hand in glove with the Duke of Billingsgate and all that set. He has even played bridge with W. B. See how well he fits in here! Doesn't it prove my point?"

Since her arrival Lady Méchante's name had buzzed from corner to corner about the room. There was already a press of men encompassing her, and ladies waited to be introduced. It was not so surprising, for Dolly Van Dream led her circle and had produced queen bees before able to set the hive swarming. So Lady Méchante's *apologia* was passed about as well. Haulick Smagg on Dolly Van Dream's acceptance was accepted, and on Lady Méchante's praise was praised. With the lash she gave him he went back into the ring, stimulated to find his work so easy.

He could not see what they were all doing there, anyway, merely standing about and talking, without drink or diversion. It was all nonsense, any way you looked at it. How could one be a bigger fool than another? What the hell was there to be afraid of? He had seen crowds on election night, crowds at Coney Island, crowds going or coming. But this was a different sort. It seemed to have no object; he wondered how anyone would know when to go home. The women were pretty enough, but they hung back so, curse them! They seemed half asleep. They began to inspire him with a dull resentment. He did not know yet that he was beginning to be bored. Afraid of them? He had money now and was afraid of nothing. His first hundred dollars had given him the will to kick an elevator starter down the

hall. His second had made him give his orders to Dolly Van Dream herself. Lady Méchante? She was another breed altogether, a thoroughbred, a prize winner, far out of his reach. There was a lady if you like! As distant as a rainbow, yet as beautifully near.

Still, though he was not cowed, he was dazed. Lady Méchante's advice had greased his way so far; he would try it again. What did it all matter? He had nothing to lose. If worst came to worst, he still had his two hundred dollars, and he could make it all up in such a drunk as would get in the papers. Why, they were all afraid of *him*, for all he knew. He decided to see if they weren't.

He had started across the room, he had reached Dolly Van Dream and opened his mouth to speak to her, when of a sudden all the electric lights went out. The *salon* was as black as midnight in a tunnel. There was a startled murmur of exclamations all over the room, and a nervous laugh ran around. Men and women jostled one another and giggled; voices rose calling for lights; a match was struck here and there, showing up half-scared, half-amused faces.

The effect on Haulick Smagg was instantaneous; he became a cave man; his costume was forgotten; forgotten was the newness of the scene, the unwonted glitter, the display of ladies' shoulders, the luxurious environment, the stones and silks, the calm, the mysterious order of the place. The darkness made it a cave. In a moment he was himself again, a primitive man. His glance had fastened on Dolly Van Dream as the light went out. He put out his hand with surety; he seized her, closed his arm about her neck and drew her face to his. His grasp was like an orang-outang's, so fierce and rapid that his embrace strangled her sudden cry of fear. Then a light came traveling in through the door, a flame on a taper. He released her like an animal afraid of fire, and when the gas was turned on he wondered at his temerity.

But more he wondered at the effect on Dolly Van Dream.

"How dare you? Really, you *mustn't* do such things here. Why, what if anyone saw you?" But there was no reproach in her eyes; only bewilderment, and perhaps even admiration.

So he had made his love in the under world, and so he had been received. It gave him a strange sense of exultation. It was the victory and not the kiss that went to his head. Lady Méchante's words of advice came to him. Was this a secret he had with Dolly Van Dream? Perhaps, with their strange manners, a kiss was a thing to be denied or hidden. Perhaps ladies did not kiss men. He had not seen any of it done since his entry into society. Lady Méchante had told him, too, that these women were no different from those he had known. Well, he would find out.

By the time the excitement had lulled and the lights had come on again, there was a movement toward the supper room. Lady Méchante shook off her suitors and captured her charge. She had spent her time well in the corner with her heiresses and tame young men. By this time she had found out about several of the guests and had marked them for the massacre. As they threaded through the throng she filled Smagg's ears with information; as they sat in the supper room she coached him between lively remarks to right and left, as to the personalities present.

There was old Huggins, for instance, the president of the Peanut Trust, whose nefarious operations had forced up prices till there was scarce sustenance in a quart. The poor cursed him nightly on the elevated and in the public parks, yet he was received in this company of the elect as without smirch. The Peanut Trust was already indicted, but it was the miserable hucksters and sidewalk vendors who were suffering, while Huggins raced in two-hundred-ton yachts.

Over against them was a member of the committee of fifty, already sold out

to the Prohibition Party, as everyone present knew.

In the corner was Theodore Glush, a manufacturer of flypaper so notoriously adulterated and bedrugged that he had twice been arrested by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. He had made his millions in flies and was said to breed them at a marshy stock farm in New Jersey to boom the sale of his product.

There was an Episcopal bishop who was known to have put musical comedies on the stage in order to cure audiences of going to the theater. Why, at their very side, was young McSmick, who had shot a tailor for attempting to collect his bill, and who had been acquitted on a defense of the Unwritten Law. Not to speak of the Honorable Maxim Penn, a federal judge who had just convicted a poor Sunday-school superintendent for sending obscene matter through the mails. True, the evidence of the crime was but a post card bearing a verse from the Bible; but, as the law requires a jury to convict if the probable effect upon a purely hypothetical person would be evil, the authorship of the text did not prevent the Sunday-school teacher's sentence. These and many other monsters she showed him; the starched shirts covered a multitude of sinners. But since they had sinned so far successfully, they were still received.

"God, what a rotten lot!" said Smagg. "Why, down our way when they find a lump of stone in the coal they heave it at the driver. I seen a barkeeper once who put soap in the beer to make it lather; he didn't live long. Let's go over and punch some of their faces. Me for Glush! Gawd! We got flies at home so thick you can't tell custard pie from huckleberry."

"Oh, the women are just as good!" said Lady Méchante. "There's one over there now, the one with the feather duster in her hair and the gold harness round her neck. She sold her daughter for three millions to an ex-bootblack called Prince Gondola. There's another one who has married thirteen men in fourteen years. She has got a

Senator now; she may work up to a coal heaver in time."

"Not *me!*" said Smagg. "I want a new one. But what do they all do?"

"Oh, things like this, and bridge and golf and dances."

"Don't they ever have any fun?"

"Oh, they go to the theater and the Opera."

Smagg grunted. "I've heard what Opera's like. Not for mine! They all have automobiles, though, same as you do."

"There's not a man in the room can run one," said Lady Méchante, "and airships aren't for sale yet. Oh, they have a very good time playing about."

"I don't see where it comes in, if it's like this. Damned if I know why they come here and stand around on their hind legs."

"Hush! They have to!" Lady Méchante shot a keen glance at him.

"Have to? Ain't they got money? Why don't they spend it?"

"It's spending them."

Smagg looked puzzled. "I ain't on to this game," he said. "There must be something in it or they wouldn't do it."

"Ah!" said Lady Méchante. "You chew on that for a while."

He had finished his salad and his lobster, and had thrust a plate of ice cream away from him so violently that it had dropped from the waiter's hands. As usual, but now with a detached, *dis-trait* manner, he had stamped upon the broken plate. The Extra Dry had mounted to his brain and set it in motion. It lifted him to equality, even to superiority, and it gave to Lady Méchante's words wings.

As his lady was now again encompassed by her admirers, he set forth for new flights, inspired by her parting precept to specialize on the old ladies. The champagne gave him charm; it freed him somewhat from the constraint of the place, and his native character came out more and more. It has been remarked that Haulick Smagg was not ill-favored; it would be too much to claim for him gracefulness, but he did have strength, almost pow-

er, and his courage waxed stronger and stronger with his scorn.

His eyes singled out Mrs. Van Dream, and he forced his way to her through the press. She made a seat for him beside her. She was solidly built, but plump and round and smooth, with a scandalously low cut corsage sewn with sequins. From her shoulders to her lowest chin there was scarce room for a neck, but what there was was white and thick. Her lips were suspiciously red, her eyebrows suspiciously black and even her ears were made up. A tiara, bursting with diamonds, adorned her too black hair.

"Well, Mr. Smagg, you're not often so frivolous as this, are you? I suppose sociology occupies most of your time, doesn't it? It's good of you to let us have you a little while."

He clasped his knees with his great white-gloved hands and thrust out his great feet. "Oh, I got to take the bad with the good in my business."

She raised her *lorgnon* to look at him, but it did not frighten him. "My daughter tells me you're so terribly learned. Positively, I'm afraid of you, Professor."

"God! I can remember when I used to be afraid of *you*, too—when I was shoveling coal into your cellar. I've seen you, many's a time, all baled up in furs with a couple of them little snipes with tall hats and tight pants waiting for you on the sidewalk. Huh! I didn't think I'd ever see the inside of *this* house."

"Well, I hope you'll see it often again. I think you're most amusing. It's good to see a new face occasionally. I know the history of everyone here by heart."

"It wouldn't bear bein' printed, from what *I* hear."

"My dear man, of course not, but what's the good of having money if we can't keep things out of the papers? In time I hope we can own all the papers in our set, and then we can do quite as we please, as they do in England now."

"Have you got much money?" Mr. Smagg inquired.

She chuckled. "I wish I had enough to pay you to come oftener. You're delightful." She reached over and tapped him on the arm.

He grabbed her fat hand and shook it cordially. "Say, you're all right, old girl, if you didn't put so much flour on your face. You don't need it, and it doesn't fool anybody."

She gasped delightedly. "Oh, Mr. Smagg, you're terrible!"

He was staring at her point blank. "I knew a girl what had eyes like yours," he remarked, "and she was a devil, too."

Old lady Van Dream bridled and was coy. "Well," she sighed, "there was a time—"

"I'll bet you're good for it yet!" He slapped her on the knee.

"Flatterer!"

"I like a woman with a temper, myself. Now you'd give a man a run for his money, I'll bet." He leaned nearer and smiled full in her face. "Say, men are crazy about you, aren't they?"

"Oh, I won't say that—but of course if you had seen me when I was younger—"

"Younger! Why, you got a good forty years yet to eat men in. Wash off some of that paint and you'll be young enough! What's them rings worth about?" He took up her hand casually and pulled off a marquise.

"Oh, some thousands perhaps; why?" She had stopped looking around to see if anyone were listening.

"I suppose a different man give you each one of them, didn't they? You must be a whirlwind, from what I hear. They say the girls in your crowd ain't in it with you. I don't wonder. I don't mind weight, myself; I like something I can feel when I pick up—good and husky like you—a good eater and all that."

Mrs. Van Dream invited him to dinner on the spot. Mr. Smagg said he didn't know whether he could come or not, but he'd see about it.

He left her to wander, hands in pocket, to other bediamonded matrons, and wherever he saw a gray hair or a too blonde one he continued his im-

pertinences. He spared neither the widow nor the divorcée. His eyes were audacious; his lips were free with compliment and with criticism. Instinctively he adopted the only safe way to win a woman's interest—by making the conversation personal from the first.

With the men he fairly swaggered.

The bishop he accused of being a Jesuit in justifying his means to his end. He called old Huggins to his face one of the predatory rich, and waxed eloquent over the wrongs done holiday makers.

"Corporations have no souls," he stormed, "except the soles of their boots to stomp on the poor with. You'll be making customers return their peanut shells next, for you to grind up to make hardwood floors of. Then you'll want the skins of 'em for red firecrackers, to compete with Chinese pauper labor. Peanuts'll be a cent apiece before you get through with us, and only the rich can afford to eat 'em. There was only forty-one to the quart last week, and it ain't one in ten is a double one nowadays. You'll bring on a riot if you don't look out, you plutocrats. The common people won't stand it much longer. If you'll take away the poor man's peanut, you'll take away the poor man's pie, and then there's going to be trouble."

Then he turned on Glush. "I've known mean men," he said, "in my day. I've known automobile tire manufacturers who had tack works on the side, and sprinkled the streets with them out of special carts. I've known phonograph men who worked in advertising features in the middle of Caruso's songs; but a man who'll dope the food of a dying fly ought to be prosecuted under the Pure Food Law."

And lastly, to McSmick: "If there's many more like you gets off, there'll be a law passed to make every tailor sew a cloth receipt into the seat of every pair of pants he makes before he sends them out. How'll we look then walking up Broadway?" he demanded savagely.

So he bullied the men and cajoled the

women, while Lady Méchante followed him about with her eyes and ears and Greek-chorused his epic progress toward popularity. The net result was six invitations to dinner, five lunches downtown, unnumbered requests to call, a few bids for week-end parties and an ingenuous declaration, in the corner of the music room, from little Emily.

"I don't know why I shouldn't tell you that I love you, Mr. Smagg. The girls in my set believe in frankness. We're *terribly* modern. So, if it's true, why shouldn't I say so? It *is* true." She looked up at him with melting eyes. "I suppose perhaps I ought to wait until I'm sure you love *me*, but perhaps you never *will* love me, or if you do you'll forget to say so. Men are so *terribly* thoughtless about such things. But surely there is nothing to be ashamed of, is there, in honest affection? I believe things would be much easier if men and women were perfectly simple with one another and said what they really thought. I would only be acting a lie if I kept this from you.

"I want to be perfectly straightforward. I respect you too much, Mr. Smagg, not to give you my whole confidence. I want to be honorable, as men are honorable. Women have been accused of deceit so long that I think every really honest and noble-hearted girl ought to take a stand in the matter. She ought to be on the right side and make no pretenses about her emotions. You move me; you trouble me; I can't take my eyes off you! You're handsome and strong and fine. I think you are kind, too. Somehow, I can't bear not to have you know it. It seems like doing you a wrong to conceal it. I can't help feeling as I do, can I? It's all a question of electricity, magnetism, chemistry. I'm not responsible, and I don't want to be held responsible. All I do want is to be able to tell you outright that I'm wildly in love with you, I'm crazy about you, I don't really think I can live without you—but that's a different thing, for I don't want to give you any trouble at all. I don't expect anything; I don't *want* anything—only to be permitted

to adore you. I know I can trust you. I know you are worthy of my honesty. It's simply fate, that's all; fate has thrown us together and I must cling to you. You needn't mind it at all, Haulick—I don't want to marry you! That would be *too* much, but I must be true to myself. I may not be true to you, Haulick, but I shall always be true to myself. There! Do you *hate* me? Do you think I'm a bold, immodest thing, just because I've shown you my naked soul?"

He had been chewing steadily at a toothpick the while, his eyes watching idly the couples barn-dancing in the ballroom. Now he spat it out and turned to the little temperamental passion-swept, hungry-eyed figure beside him. "Oh, that's all right," he said. "I guess I'll go out and have a smoke." He left her and walked out of the room without exactly understanding what had happened.

VI

WRESTLING BREWSTER BRADFORD had called at the Flatiron Building once twice, thrice; the result being that, at the third call, he had produced and read the manuscript of a singularly keen and subtle piece of symbolistic fiction, done with masterly style. Lady Méchante positively thrilled under it.

"Isn't that rotten?" he asked. "It is positively the nearest I can come to it." He looked at her hopelessly.

"Why, it's superb!" she exclaimed.

"You've actually *got* it! It's life!"

"It's death for me," he said. "That's the sort of stuff I am doomed to write."

"I'd be glad to be able to do it."

"It's as easy as talking. I can do it by the week at a stretch. What good does it do? I can't possibly sell it to anything except the *Massachusetts Monthly* or the *Hemispherical Review*. I'll get fourteen dollars for it and nobody will ever see it except educated people. Nobody but men and a few school teachers. Why can't I write anything that's fit for women, and for *Blankley's*?" His look was pathetic.

"Do you like *Blankley's*?" she asked, raising her eyebrows.

"Like it? Why, I adore it, and that's no mere figure of speech. Why, people *read* that magazine; they don't leave it on the lower shelf of the library table, or send it to the lighthouse men. They gloat; they devour. *Women* read it, and it's women who make fame and fortune for writers. God! If I could ever take up that magazine, with its picture of a slim, anemic female on the cover, with the blurb underneath:

"I consider this number of my magazine about the hottest piece of pie that was ever shoved over the counter. It has snap and go and dash and brains in it. Read it, and see if I haven't got Kipling locked into the coal cellar ringing up "information""

—if I could find a story of mine underneath *that* cover I'd know I'd made good!" He strode up and down the room in his excitement.

"Still, there aren't many who can turn out the sort of fiction that you are capable of. Why, it's equal to George Meredith, it seems to me. You have the true literary instinct."

"That's just the trouble. I don't want the true literary instinct. I want to write one of the Six Best Sellers. I want to appear in that immortal list of names for at least one month, in at least one town."

"I suppose you *would* get more royalties," said Lady Méchante, leading him on.

"Royalties be hanged! I'd get more fame, hot off the saucepan, made while you wait. I want to be able to go into the public library at East Bend, Iowa, and take down my novel off the shelf and find it read to a frazzle—worn and torn and sticky with chewing gum, half the leaves gone, the covers loose, and scrawled across the title page, 'This is a good book!' *That's* the test of literary success."

"But you must get good reviews," said Lady Méchante. "That ought to console you some."

"Reviewers! They're all prostituted to the advertising department in the papers. There's no such thing left as literary criticism. Why, I know a girl

on the Boston *Ledger* who is a friend of the literary editor. She takes home six volumes a week. Two she reads herself; she gives one to her grandmother, one to her mother, one to her little sister and one to the cook. They tell her what they think about them, and she writes it down and turns it in. No, there's only one reviewer worth considering." He shook his finger at her. "And that's the little girl in Terre Haute who goes down to the book store and rummages the counter till she finds a book with a pretty girl on the cover and illustrations by Misty, plenty of conversation and a good ending. The little girl that takes it home with a box of caramels, pins a blanket over the transom of her door and sits up and reads till three o'clock and then talks about it next day. *That's* who I want to write for. There's a string of 'em from here to Death Valley, all reading the same book at the same time. I'd like to marry one of them and find out what they're like. Perhaps I could get an idea how to sell more than twenty-five hundred copies then."

"Why, you have set your name in American literature!" Lady Méchante protested.

"I'd rather set my name in the *Woman's Own Comrade*. I never saw a girl in a street car reading one of *my* books. Why, even when I do sell one, the publisher is frightened to death of my copy. In the last one they even made me expurgate three dots that they said were too suggestive. Could my heroine have a 'laughing devil in her eye'? Not much. They changed it to 'laughing light.' They made her go home at ten o'clock instead of eleven, and forbade her to wear silk stockings. The natural inference was, of course, that she went round bare-legged. Publishers didn't care, so long as it wasn't mentioned. I don't care either! If I could invent a woman who had nothing but a head and hands, I'd do it, too. The trouble is, I suppose, I know too much about Society to write about it successfully, and I've seen too many real women with characters and cor-

sets to be able to draw the paper dolls the little girls want nowadays. But I'll do it, by heaven, if I have to get my little niece to help me! I'll sell in the Middle West yet. But I'll have to get a bottle of pale blue ink to write with."

So, in Lady Méchante's little salon, Wrestling Brewster Bradford delivered his jeremiad. She assured him that such magnificent determination must win, and repeated effort would undoubtedly place him in the ranks of the select company which changes year by year. Meanwhile, the most she could do was to congratulate any grandchildren that might be his, and assure him of her sympathy and her respect.

"I can't help being terribly afraid of you," she declared. "Why, I suppose you have coats of arms on your walls and family trees reaching clear to the ceiling, don't you? I have never before met one of the Mayflower Descendants. It seems very wonderful to the poor little granddaughter of a wretched earl," she said, shivering. "I hope you won't come here with all your blue ribbons and things on. I'm terribly afraid of a badge! You'll think I'm a miserable little parvenu. Don't tell me you're a Son of the Draft Riots! I couldn't stand *that*!"

"Oh, you mustn't mind it. I won't patronize you, I'm sure. For my part, I think a lord is fully the equal of a member of the Boston Tea Party. They are nothing but names anyway, and we're not responsible for our ancestors."

"But they are, in a way, for us."

"Oh, yes; it's best to do them credit, if you can. But if you don't happen to have any that were particularly important it shouldn't matter much."

"Still, it gives a certain something—a poise, a dignity, that I could never attain, I'm sure. My first husband, Lord Méchante, used to say that he felt like a perfect bounder every time he met an American. It's tremendously decent of you to come and see me, and I'll have to try and not disgrace you if I can manage it. Do you think I ought to wear my coronet? Or would

it be too pitiful to try and keep up with you? Why, your sister may be the president of a Chapter, for all I know, and have her picture in the paper every time there's a fight in the Board of Governors! I'm afraid I'm perfectly hopeless."

"Nonsense, my dear Mrs. Hellysh; you're quite fit for any circle of American Society. I can't think you would seem out of place in even our oldest families. I'm sure I find you most amusing. It does me good to see another sort of person for a change."

"Thank you," said Lady Méchante. "It's awfully good of you to say it. And I've been thinking, don't you know, that that might do *you* good, too. What I mean to say is that you can't get the popular point of view you need by association with your blue-blooded set."

"Well, I'm associating with you now, am I not? I do find the change beneficial, I confess."

"Oh, I know, but you see the trouble is that, while of course I'm your social inferior, I happen to be, mentally, quite your equal. It's precisely that mental atmosphere you should change. As you yourself said, you can't write about Society if you're in Society yourself. One doesn't get local color that way at all. Society people don't read Society novels; they don't need to. Society novels are written for the benefit and amusement of the folk beyond the pale. It is *their* conception of Society you want to get before you become one of the immortal Six. One doesn't expect burglar stories to be written by burglars, does one? Nor detective stories by detectives. Why should a Society man write a Society story, then? It is perfectly absurd."

"But I never wrote a Society story," said Bradford.

"Which is precisely why you are not a Best Seller."

"Well, I don't see any way out of it, then."

The lady laughed, and she used on him that peculiar searching glance which had so often been effective. "The way out of it is perfectly plain. You

must change your *milieu*—your viewpoint, your habits, your companions." Her eyes sparkled now.

"How can I do that, I wonder?" He mused on the problem.

"I'll tell you. You must go down into the under world, where people feel and do not think. You must study life at close range, forget your proud ancestry, your intellectual processes, your critical sense. Find out what the other half reads, and why."

"Not a bad idea," said Bradford. "Of course I do know how to write, and, if I could manage to forget it, I might do something great."

"Oh, it isn't so much learning *how* not to write, as *what* not to write."

"Well, I believe I'll try it. I might get a position as secretary, say, to some millionaire."

Lady Méchante snickered as she looked at him. "What you *ought* to do," she said, with the accent on the "ought," "is—I know it is, but it would be too perfect, too delicious—to be a coal heaver." She raised her eyes to the ceiling. "What poetic justice! What a gorgeous piece of symmetry! What composition! What compensation!"

"A coal heaver! Do you really think it is necessary to be quite as dirty as that, Mrs. Hellysh?" He hung upon her words anxiously.

"Well, perhaps not," she sighed, "though it would do me infinite good if you could only bring yourself to it. I think I'll have to let you off with foot-man. I happen to know a very respectable, deserving family, entirely out of your world, and, of course, miles below you socially. They are millionaires named Van Dream. I think I might get you in there, and I'm sure that you'd find among the servants exactly that idea of life and literature which you will find essential if you are really determined to succeed in fiction."

"By Jove! I believe you have got the secret of it!" And he went over to her, patrician though he was—so shocked out of his traditional calm—and took both Lady Méchante's hands in his, shaking them in gratitude.

She looked up at him through half-closed lids and shot him a dangerous little message, secret as a Masonic password. But he did not receive it, though the little adventuress got her answer. The complacency of the Bradfords protected him. He was too intent upon the scheme she had proposed. The more he thought of it, the more sure he was that the easiest path to literary eminence led up Mrs. Van Dream's back stairs.

He gave Lady Méchante, in fact, no rest until she had secured the position for him. With the invention of his previous history and the forging of several "characters" from English housekeepers, it was hardly a week before Wrestling Brewster Bradford, in a striped waistcoat and brass buttons, opened the front door to callers at the Fifth Avenue chateau.

VII

SMAGG progressed by leaps and bounds. He ran rampant through Society, which followed him, gasping at the exhibition. He was booted and spurred now, whipping them right and left with flattery and abuse, *débutante*, dancing man and matron. Surely, as Methuselah has it, "For him who careth not, the garlands are hung in every house." Smagg cared not one whit; he was playing the game now, and was more interested in the moves than the winning. Little Emily was not the only dabchick who would traffic with him in the peculiarly modern manner of flirtship then regnant. Old lady Van Dream was but one of his conquests among the dowagers. With them, however, he was no mere handy man, or tame cat, to do their bidding. Smagg had no champagne to sell and no axes to grind save his own bright hatchet, which Lady Méchante kept sharpened for him. With the men, he was as potent; he dominated and blustered, bluff for their bluff, brag for their boast. Indeed, his patroness, seeing how well his words carried, how magnificent was his face with them, had serious thoughts

of establishing him downtown in a splendid mahogany office, with counters, brass rails, glass doors and blonde typists galore. Why, in this town, as she soon discovered, a letterhead sufficed. All he would have to do would be to refuse money, select his clients from the line and bag the sport. If he could only be induced to fear a waiter enough to spend as much as his fellows in the fashionable restaurants, he would inspire confidence. Smagg, however, had a way of ordering only what he wished to eat, and a rooted dislike of paying more than four times its worth. With such low tendencies, Lady Méchante was afraid to risk him among the men of the city. To be as eccentric as that one must needs have millions, which she had not.

She followed him, then, like a shadow in his social career. He opened doors for her, for he was branded by the matrons as an Interesting Young Man. She kept in the middle distance, occasionally venturing near enough to slip him an aphorism or epigram or a paradox, or to push him on when he grew faint-hearted. By this time, however, Smagg had passed the first corner and was now well into the straight. His eyes began to open. To be sulphitic with bromides, and with sulphites bromidic, he found, was the way to success. He needed no longer the advice: "Get into a corner and say anything you can think of—only talk!" He began to have secrets with other sorts than Dolly Van Dream. He had an ingenious way of discovering what girls most liked and most feared to talk about, and he was wonderful with the mothers of babes. He was taught bridge and learned adroitly when to lose or win. He talked of Aiken and Jekyl Island to one set, or Virginia Hot Springs and Lenox to another, while, with those on the perimeter of his circle, he had discrimination enough to mention Palm Beach or Lakewood. He knew now how many buttons should be on the coat of a butler, and could tell a parlor maid from an upstairs servant, and just who cleaned the silver.

Meanwhile he was leaving cards, eat-

ing dinners—marking with the end of his fork on the tablecloth, to illustrate his remarks, loafing in clubs with his hat on and fozzling on the links with the best of them. He deplored the inquisitiveness and impertinence of the newspapers with the rest of his set, and, with the rest of his set, read the society column every morning, looking for the latest scandal and to see if his name were mentioned. He grew to know every horse on upper Fifth Avenue and could tell when a landau's lines followed the latest mode. He sneered at politics and the corruption of the municipal administration, but thought it foolish to attend the primaries. At this phase of his career he was, in his circle, an average man and slipped along smoothly and easily in the groove. He had thoughts on sociology, too, and here his reputation gave him authority. These, however, were for club and tea table use, when the social secretaries were out of earshot.

"You can't tell me. I know the whole thing, and I've seen how education affects the working people. It's only making the masses discontented. It's merely showing them things that are and should be out of their reach. What's the good of teaching a hod carrier astronomy? He'll never be able to own an observatory—he'll only fall off his ladder with his bricks while he's gawking up into the sky. So long as they don't know how to read, they're happy. No, I don't mind a coal heaver trying to pass for a gentleman, if he can do it." Here Smagg would lean back and roll his Carolina Perfecto between his teeth.

"No, a coal heaver couldn't do it and he wouldn't be happy if he did. He couldn't do it because his psychology is entirely different; he hasn't evolved sufficiently; he couldn't make the fine distinctions we all make. Why, he couldn't tell a foreign champagne from a domestic brand. He'd show the mark of a beast and prefer beer to either." Here Smagg's eyes grew sad.

"He wouldn't be happy just because he *did* prefer beer. He wouldn't be happy because he couldn't have his way

with women; he couldn't order them about and kiss 'em the way he used to. He wouldn't be happy on account of his clothes and his tobacco. You can teach a man quaternions and Spenser's poetry, but you can't teach him to forget the taste of a five-cent plug of Navy chewing tobacco. It's nature's law. The coherence of the social fabric must be maintained or our civilization will all go to pot." And Haulick Smagg would sigh and tap the bell and send the boy for his mail and a couple of gin rikeys.

He was strong, too, for the family as the indivisible unit of our civilization, strong against divorce in its attempt to divide the indivisible, strong for the race, toward which divorce was indubitably hostile. This, in the secondary stage of Smagg's evolution. The time was to come when Smagg, breaking free from his house of bondage, was to proclaim that divorce should be as easy as marriage—that one should be able to be wedded by telephone or postcard and be divorced by the nearest policeman. But this is premature.

Through all this conventional career Dolly Van Dream followed him, panting and breathless. She was fascinated by him, alternately delighted and disgusted. By just that extra ounce of brains, which was her unique birthright in this world, she perceived dimly that something was wrong. She noted tiny inconsistencies in his character. Traces of Smagg's true nature appeared at times, like a lozenge of naked skin shown in the back of a lady's neck when a button has gone astray. That touch of humanity in him distinguished him from the staid sobriety of other men in her set. It was as if she saw the first whiffs of smoke from a slumbering volcano. Her social instinct disapproved of all evidences of originality, but her mind rejoiced. It made him impossible, but it made him charming. When he was proper he overdid propriety; his polish was suspiciously smooth, so smooth that the scratches showed too plainly on his surface.

There was another source of disturbance similar to this in the aspect of her

new footman. He, too, was too perfect in his manner when he was correct, not to make his occasional lapses from a beautiful servility noticeable. He had come, extravagantly recommended, from Lady Méchante. He had been Lord Suddenleigh's man, and valet to the Duke of Billingsgate. If so, why, when she caught him off guard, should this very distinguished young man eye her so hungrily? He waited on her with a little too much alacrity. He failed to achieve that fine scorn, that bored look, that marks the acme of service. She could not put her finger on the trouble yet with either of them, but both worried her.

To Lady Méchante, however, of course the secret was clear, it having been confided to her by the footman in a hurried interview in the hall.

"This is just exactly what I wanted," said Bradford. "Do you know, these people below stairs have precisely the point of view on Society that is necessary for successful fiction. They know all the manners and customs of this particular variety, and nothing of their real thoughts and emotions. All one has to do is to take a lot of lay figures and put them into the attitudes any well trained servant can recognize—and there you have a Best Seller ready made to your hand. This butler, Tillotson, I believe has the thing better than even my little girl in Terre Haute, and I'm studying his taste night and day. I'm finding out what he thinks of these people, and what are his theories as to their actions. I'm not so sure that Tillotson hasn't written a lot of Best Sellers himself. Sometimes I suspect him of being really Robert Hallroom himself. There are a lot of Hallroom's books whose scenes might have been laid in this very house. His whole interpretation of Society convinces me."

"I believe you are right," said Lady Méchante. "It must be infinitely amusing to be a servant. I quite envy you!"

"The trouble is I can't help forgetting occasionally that I am a servant. Miss Van Dream does disturb

me some, I confess. I hadn't expected to find a girl like that in a nest of mere multimillionaires. Why, you'd never imagine but what she had Family! Actually, I shouldn't wonder but her ancestry goes back a couple of hundred years. Of course you'd never mistake her for a Mayflower Descendant, you know, but her people might have come over in the *Blessing of the Bay*, say. That vessel didn't land at Plymouth, you know, but at Salem, and not till 1630. Ten years makes a lot of difference to an ancestor in America."

She laughed and left him to his point of view and his dilemma, for she had started him and he would go straight enough to the inevitable climax. Haulick Smagg required new attention now, for he was developing rapidly in a new direction.

Haulick Smagg, in fact, had suddenly become the victim of a yearning for Art. He longed for expression. Many days of dalliance in Dolly Van Dream's studio and the workrooms of equally academic painters had inspired in him a desire for creation. He wanted to go and do likewise; have admiring visitors "Oh!" and "Ah!" at his canvases while he shrugged his shoulders deprecatingly. This fitted Lady Méchante's plans to a T. She established him in a studio on Twenty-third Street and bought him the paraphernalia of his craft, taking care that his stretchers should be huge, his colors violent. She expected something elemental, titanic. She would know, now, how the cave man graved his mammoth upon the reindeer's horn.

Nor was she disappointed.

For a while she left him alone with his genius, while the roc's egg hatched. Not by one maxim or platitude, such as guided his course in Society, did she direct his path in Art. Round the second corner in his career he must steer alone. She had wound him up and set him but for this, and she anticipated delight in his wild curves and zigzags. The mechanics of it was easy enough. He had seen paints mixed and applied. He had seen painters at work, with nude models posed stiffly against leather screens or draperies. He had

seen artists imitate the photograph with realism, or imitate the mist with impressionism. He had studied still life and *genre*. He had seen men frame nature and dismember it. Which would he choose? Calm, sane tonalities, or the perfervid rapture of pure color?

A week, two weeks, elapsed before Lady Méchante dared visit his studio, but at the first peep through the door she shrieked with delight and astonishment. No well bred nudes, no complacent landscapes or still lifes confronted her. The vision was stunning; a less courageous mind than hers would have thought it horrid. On the easel, upon the wall or standing upon the floor, here, there and everywhere, impossible of escaping, were such pictures drawn with such ferocity, colored with such violent hues as made the place desperate. His canvases challenged reason, defied art, boldly proclaimed themselves for the impossible. The outrageous appeal of the primitive had called forth monsters from his brush.

But it was not this apotheosis of the ugly that surprised her most. Wild work she had expected and desired, but that he had in his initial conception and in his utter abrogation of technique happened unconsciously to fall in line with the latest cry of Paris was miraculous. He, who had never been in France, who had never seen a single disciple of its school, was of "les Fauves"—he was a Wild Beast—wilder, if possible than Dérain, as wild as Czobel or Picasso. Haulick Smagg, as the first priest of Horror, had brought the unholy doctrine at last into New York.

Exquisitely modern herself, she had long been familiar with the new revolt against Impressionism in Paris. She had followed that crazy little band of artists when, in their first break away from tradition, they had been dubbed the "Incoherents"; followed them till Matisse took the lead of the "Invertebrates." In two weeks Haulick Smagg had proved himself more invertebrate, more incoherent, than the wildest Beast. He had no classic education to forget or eschew; he had neither

mottled his canvases with pigment nor laid on his tones transparent with turpentine. So, without imitation, with no knowledge of the vocabulary of "les Fauves," with no prating of "harmonies of volume," voicing no scorn for "mere charm," his native abandon had eclipsed the maddest of these foreign sensationalists.

The rudely carved African gods that had delighted and stimulated Dérain, the Alaskan totem poles to which Picasso was indebted for his fury, the Aztec graven images that had urged Czobel to his ferocity, were all unknown to Haulick Smagg. Unknown was the simplicity of Egyptian sculptures, the directness of Hindoo indecency, the ingenuous frankness of Bayeux *broderies*, the *naïf* freaks of Malayan or Cambodian art. He had for a stimulus only a hunger for something more furiously emotional than he had seen, more blood curdling, more dire. Matisse, the Master, drew women with six fingers. Smagg drew them with twelve or thirteen. Picasso drew them with triangles; Smagg's were fused trapezoids. Dérain's shrill blues and tumultuous reds, Czobel's harsh greens and Picasso's hot yellows Smagg, in his artistic orgy, rewove into crazier forms. His nudes, if they were nudes, these trapezoidal nightmare-hued women, were revolting to the ordinary spectator, not with suggestive nakedness, but with their immoral, unspeakable garments of frenetic color.

Lady Méchante, seeing all this, perceived that Smagg's wings had begun to sprout. How long could she hold him?

She had found the outer door ajar and had gone in to wander in amazement through the studio for a while, gloating over his barbaric essays. Now, coming back to the small reception room, she noticed upon the table a huge white bowl of liquid red paint standing on the exact center. She was looking at it, smiling, at no loss to interpret its meaning, when Smagg burst in, bearing a leather suit case. He looked up at her like a hound.

"What do you think of 'em?"

"I want to know what they mean, first."

"Don't you know?"

"Yes, but do *you*?"

He set down the suit case and opened it. Out tumbled a model cube of white painted wood, a glass sphere and a piece of intricately twisted telegraph wire. He placed them affectionately upon the table, then stepped back and regarded them musingly. "How do you like them?" he asked. "Do *they* mean anything, too?"

She caressed the crystal sphere gently. "I suppose this is a symbol of simplicity and unity"—she touched the telegraph wire—"as this is of complexity." She looked at him out of the corner of her eyes, as if anxious as to his reply.

"Symbols be durned!" He took up the cube, feeling gratefully its edges and corners. "I like 'em for *themselves*. The same as I like *you* for yourself, don't I? I like this because it's square and straight and sharp!" He took up the sphere. "I like this because it's round and transparent and heavy." He fingered the telegraph wire. "I like this because it's one thing and yet it squirms into a complicated mess. It has a character of its own. It's funny, and it makes me happy."

"And this bowl of red paint?" she asked, scarcely able to resist her impulse to hug him.

"I like it because it's red!" He dipped his big forefinger into it and held up his hand, dripping, as if it had been plunged in blood. So keen was the delight written upon his face that she almost expected him to lick his finger to gain another vivid, sensuous impression. "Can't you understand it?" he asked plaintively. "Can't you see that mere heaviness and squareness and redness are wonderful and compelling?"

"My dear Haulick," she exclaimed, "it's *you* who are wonderful and compelling! You've quite crawled out of the chrysalis! I'm afraid of you. I feel as if I were struggling to hold down a half-filled balloon. If you can only explain your pictures as well—but that would be too much!"

"Do you think they're beautiful?" he asked.

"Well, hardly that."

"Do you think they're ugly?"

"They're not that either, exactly. They're something different from both."

He nodded his head thoughtfully and his lean, spare face seemed to become faintly transfused with light, as if it were being gradually illuminated by some increasing spark within his brain. Then he spoke slowly. "It's this way, it seems to me." He held up the twisted wire. "Suppose this is beautiful. Now, if I turn it upside down it represents the ugly, we'll say, because the ugly is the opposite of the beautiful." He walked with his symbol toward the mirror. "Then what's the image in the glass mean, I'd like to know? It's the beautiful backwards or inside out, ain't it? That's what I mean. That's what I tried to paint. I don't know what you call it, but it's a new kind of beauty that no one's ever seen. And, by God, it's *my* kind! I've felt it all my life, dimly. I can't do it yet, but that's what I'm after."

"My dear amiable Titan," she said, going up to him and taking his hand, "if you only knew it, there are hundreds of young men in Paris who are after the same thing and haven't come half as near to it as you have. Before long you'll be talking of 'harmonies of volume,' too!"

And while he listened, rapt, she told him of "les Fauves" and the school of experimenters who were pursuing the neo-primitive in Montmartre and Montparnasse. She told him of Picasso, who, since Matisse had said the triangle was the symbol of the absolute, had contrived huge colored females entirely of triangles and named them "Absolute Woman." She told of Chabot, the gay-hearted Provençal, who did his landscapes with thick black lines, as if by a red hot poker. She told him of Herbin, whose perspectives were more violent than the Japanese. Lastly, she told him of the Japanese, too, who cast no shadows, portraying the Thing Itself.

"And I suppose that, like them, you

use no models," she ended. "I don't know where you'd get a woman to paint such things from, unless she'd been through an earthquake and half a dozen railroad accidents."

"Models? Of course I used them! Pretty girls, too, you'd call 'em, some of 'em; some of 'em homely. Can't a homely woman have bulk and—what was it you called it?"

"Harmony of volume," she smiled. "You've come to it at last; I thought you would."

"Don't you understand? I don't try to paint what I *see*—that's what they all do, and it can't be done! I paint what I *feel* when I look at a thing. Why, see here; what did you tell me yourself about this here Chopin—that prelude he did in a thunderstorm, wasn't it? He didn't try to imitate thunder on the piano, or rain, or waves or anything like that. But when you played it I felt like I was dying. That's what I want to do. When I see a thing I like, it gives me a kind of an ache somewhere. I ain't tryin' to paint the thing; I'm painting the ache, kind of."

"My poor fellow, how you must have suffered!"

Lady Méchante gazed at the representation of a flayed female on an easel. One arm was curved like the handle of a pitcher; the other was as angular as a swastika. The lady's toes were like a coarse tooth comb upon the end of her oblong feet. There was Smagg's beauty—not intrinsic but subjective, forthright in his primitive, direct appeal to the emotions. With all its decorative might, she could, by standing mentally upon her head, see that the thing had feeling. It was no mere message to the senses.

"If we can only keep it out of the Sunday supplements," she said thoughtfully, "and get it into the heads of one or two I know, I'll soon have you another title. You'll be as famous in Art as you are in Society. By the way, how are you getting along at the Van Drears' now? I've quite lost sight of you."

"Oh, that's so," said Smagg. "The

old lady wanted me to come up this afternoon and go over a list of people she wants to invite for a dinner dance. I'm afraid she's going to ask two or three *débutantes* I don't like the looks of, and she had a rotten wine last time. I guess I'll run up and see that she does it right."

VIII

As Lady Méchante, alias Mrs. Nelly Hellysh, left Dolly Van Dream's own sitting room, she was plucked at in the hall by a handsome and distinguished footman and drawn into the reception room. Bradford's eyes were alight with emotion; Bradford's hands trembled. He had dropped his servility in this clandestine retreat and was once more the Scion of Shay's Rebellion.

"What do you think?" he whispered. "I have discovered the most tremendous piece of graft and corruption ever known! There's an outrageous traffic going on in this house and, I believe, in almost every other big Fifth Avenue residence, that will make the most sensational articles ever printed in a magazine. Why, I'll only have to pick my editors and name my terms!"

"Whatever do you mean? Have you ferreted out the Shame of the *Débutantes*, or Frenzied Lingerie, the Crimes of the Chaperones, or what?"

"Oh, it's too revolting! All these butlers, it seems, take tips from their millionaire employers for teaching them etiquette in their leisure moments. They've leagued themselves together and concocted all sorts of new rules of deportment for Society. By this time the millionaires are completely under the thumbs of the butlers. The location of the forks and spoons on the table is changed every week so nobody will know how to use them without instruction. Same way with the handshake, with visiting cards and all sorts of things. How to use a valet, tipping in country houses, good form at the Opera—all extra. They're trying to make the whole thing so complicated that nobody will know what to do or how to do it. Why, I've seen butlers bully

their employers in a way to make your blood run cold! They won't let a man see his own friends if they don't like them. They can pronounce a *débutante déclassée*, and she can't get to a dinner in a season. You wouldn't believe how far it's gone, and it's getting worse every day."

"Well, how are you going to cope with it? Have you a remedy?"

"Surely. I'm going to propose the establishment of a clearing house for visiting cards at the Plaza Hotel. Then nobody will have to call at all. Every card will be credited and statements issued every month. The same way with the dinners. Mrs. A. will give a promissory note for one to Mrs. B. Mrs. B. will do the same for Mrs. A., and when the books are balanced the whole thing will be evened up without dining at all. It will rescue the millionaires from the clutches of the butlers, and give them time and opportunity to enjoy themselves in a sane human fashion."

"You will become famous!"

"I should say so," said Bradford exultantly. "For the first time in my life I'll achieve a 'blurb.' There'll be a blurb in the magazines booming me as the newest muckraker, a blurb on the cover of my book telling how many heart throbs there are in the volume, and blurbs in the advertising columns of the papers saying that thirteen editions were exhausted before publication, blurbs in the Editor's Guff of the Twocenter Magazines, blurbing me as their latest discovery. I'm going to be discovered, Mrs. Hellysh; there's no doubt about that now!"

"Fancy Wrestling Brewster Bradford being discovered! Fancy the author of 'Essays in Enchantment' being discovered—in a muck heap!" Bradford looked far away, through the silken tapestry of the wall, through the shell of French Renaissance to where lay his dream. Lady Méchante called him out of his reverie. "And how about Dolly?" she asked.

He started convulsively and looked at her. "I can't get her out of my mind," he said; "she seems so incon-

gruous here in the midst of all this mere vulgar wealth. It doesn't seem to rub off on her at all, somehow; she's like a white pigeon in the slums. I hate to think of her as being below me. Mrs. Hellysh, I am very much afraid that I am in danger of becoming entangled in a *mésalliance*."

"Oh, Mr. Bradford!" she cried, clasping her hands. "Think of your mother! Think of your sister—think of the Colonial Skirmishers. You, a nephew-in-law of a Secretary of the Descendants of the Survivors of the Indian Massacres! Let me beg of you to think twice before you offer your hand to the daughter of a mere millionaire."

"Oh, it's not in that quality that I shall offer myself," he replied. "In fact, I don't want her to know that I'm in any way her superior. I want her to love me for myself alone. If she accepts me as a simple footman, I'll know her heart's all right, and she will be worthy to be a Scion-by-marriage of Shay's Rebellion."

"James!" Miss Van Dream's voice came singing down the hall, searching her lackey. Lady Méchante hurriedly withdrew.

It was lucky for James the footman's peace of mind and matrimonial air castles that he did not hear a conversation that was even then taking place in the library, where old lady Van Dream, gazing indulgently at poor Smagg, was unburdening a mother's breast. Haulick Smagg, in pin-pointed morning coat, in fawn waistcoat and shepherd's plaid trousers, was giving negligent attention, dividing his interest in her with a petulant Pomeranian puppy that gnawed at his heels.

"I don't know what I'm going to do with Dolly," said Mrs. Van Dream.

"Well, I guess you needn't worry. If there's anything going to be done she'll do it herself."

"Ah, but this is a thing she can hardly do herself."

"Why not? Ain't she clever enough?"

"But this is a man's work, Mr. Smagg."

"She can do a bigger man's work than most men I know. I seen her pick up and carry a wad of clay as heavy as a cartwheel, the other day."

"Oh, it isn't a question of strength, but of delicacy."

"What is it then, Lulu? Out with it!"

"Can't you guess, Mr. Smagg?" She assumed a sentimental attitude. "I want Dolly to be happy."

"Why, ain't she happy? She looks all right. I should say she'd gained four pounds in the last week."

"She needs protection. She needs a man to lean upon. She needs *you*, Mr. Smagg." She watched the effect of her words anxiously.

"First I ever heard of it," said Smagg, kicking the Pomeranian till it yelped.

"She wouldn't be likely to tell you; she wouldn't want you to know."

"What do *you* tell me for then?"

"Because I know you love her. I know my mother's eyes are not deceived." She added soulfully: "I can feel your vibrations. You can't deceive me, Mr. Smagg. I am never mistaken in these things."

"Huh!" said Smagg. "You may feel 'em, but I'll be durned if I can."

She shook her finger at him playfully. "I know! You men are all alike."

"If they're all alike, wouldn't somebody else do just as well?" Smagg was sullen.

"Do you mean to say you don't want to marry her? Why, you've been paying her all sorts of attentions."

"I'd rather marry you," said Smagg. "There ain't quite enough of her to suit me."

Mrs. Van Dream, though not displeased, pursued the subject. "Don't you think she's pretty?"

"I don't know," said Smagg thoughtfully. "She might do. I'll think it over. You wasn't thinking of getting married yourself, I suppose?"

"My dear boy, I'm old enough to be your mother; I hope I shall be your mother before long."

"Mother-in-laws are a pile different from mothers, from all I hear."

The project interested him more than he had shown. But it was his rule to decide nothing before conferring with his patroness. He left Mrs. Van Dream, therefore, dangling in doubt, yet hoping against hope that this interesting young man, who had made such a furore in her set and was fast becoming a Society leader, would, before long, become a member of the family.

She had spoken of Dolly's happiness, voicing her maternal instinct more than Dolly's own views on the subject. Mother and daughter had indulged in touching confidences, one to the other, but, though Dolly acknowledged that she was fascinated, she was by no means sure she was willing to marry any such Society comet as Smagg had proved to be, social arbiter though he might become.

True, most of the traces of what Dolly had called "smaggery" had vanished. He no longer smagged flies. He did not smagg into a room in the old way she had laughed at, nor did he smagg his food. Indeed, his very smaggery, transformed, sublimated into the world of art, had thrilled her, even more deeply than she had been thrilled that evening that he smagged her when the lights went out. She had been his first disciple, the first eagerly to accept his ideas and manufacture phrases by which to justify them. She had rallied the more radical of both the groups she led, the Intellectuals and the Enlightened. Already one heard much of "harmonies of volume," much diatribe directed against "mere charm." Dolly, herself, was incapable of wielding her own brush in so heroic a manner, but something in his masculine potency of appeal she answered to. Answered, subconsciously as yet; for, as yet, she thought herself moved more by a theory than by a man. Intellectually and emotionally she embraced his ideas, but embracing Smagg himself was a different matter. She could not yet forget his smaggery; that appeared as the scratches on his varnish. Still, he disturbed her. Many a night she wet her pillow with her tears, wondering how such a man could move her.

But he was to move her more, consciously and unconsciously, in intellect and in emotion; for Smagg's wings grew from day to day. He was now quite free of Lady Méchante's guidance and sword. The platitudes with which he had won his entrance into Society were discarded, for he no longer needed them. The bromidic views upon the submerged tenth with which she had so artfully impregnated his mental system were, in this new phase, thrown off, defeated by the virile power of Smagg's newfledged mind. He no longer indulged in polite asteisms and pedantic patronage with regard to Socialism. Seeing the old industrial order was as bad as could be conceived, he flew to the ranks of the only camp of thought that offered a remedy.

And most he marveled at that sad, equivocal creature who, occulted by the brilliance of rich relatives, wore her pathetic masquerade as lady in the world she had all but lost. He watched these "companions," or social secretaries, belike, and when occasion offered gave them sympathy in their dubious state. While on country visits he often saw one of these hapless, luckless ones in her decayed gentility, when the house was crowded, share her room with a maid without daring to protest. He saw her in the city carrying dogs across the street like lackeys. He saw her in hotels, going down to breakfast in the dining room to save the fifty-cent service in her room. He saw her forced to stay indoors on a Sunday afternoon, when the servants went free. He saw her spending herself in an infinite number of capacities, as maid, trained nurse, secretary, dressmaker, milliner—or, when a fourth lady failed to appear, he saw her come down to dinner in an old gown of her rich aunt's, which did not spare her youth and borrowed of her freshness—a strange, timid creature. He saw how, every time a man made bold to speak to her, the whole family listened with eager ears, and five minutes afterwards tore out of her heart the secret of his attention. He saw her in her isolation, with not an evening to herself, with the im-

possibility of making friends, taking tea and desperate chances with personable young men when she was supposed to be shopping. Truly, it had no tendency to teach her to be truthful, this regime; her one object in life, he discovered, was to deceive her employer. Employer? Never that, of course! Did she not have presents of her rich aunt's old hats—black things with little stick-ups in them? Did not her rich aunt instruct her how to wear her hair in a prim, old-fashioned, inconspicuous manner, so as to be labeled as dependent?

From such as these, in stolen interviews, he learned much of life, and wondered at this sacrifice of virgins. Why, down on Delancey Street, where he had lived, the working girls had a Settlement House, where amiable young socialistic millionaires met them on terms of equality, took them out riding, gave them the best of modern culture! Here celebrated authors and foreign statesmen came, till the girls were surfeited with opportunity. Here the best music was played, select clubs were established, motor cars could be had free for Sundays, excursions were planned for every holiday. He told these poor companions about it, and urged them to emigrate to the slums, where they could be sure of every social advantage and an occasional evening off for diversion—amateur theatricals trained by New York's cleverest young men, and lectures on Fridays by the world-famous. But ever they hugged the delusion of caste, and dwelt as *mamelukes* in their slavery.

Once started, he went faster and faster. He roamed hungrily from one art to another, all that was primitive in him rejoicing in all that was modern. Herein lay no paradox, for Smagg had but to look upward and see modernity over his head. The cycle of culture in its spiral rise had completed the circle, and had returned to view from a higher altitude the clean cut truths which had once, at the beginning of the helix, inspired the primal man.

"It's the *Beaux Arts* men," said Smagg, "who are the curse of archi-

tecture in America, and have prevented the development of a native order, with their eternal classic modules. Why, whenever I see an Ionic column I look on it as a gravestone. The whole country is one vast cemetery. Anyone would think that the Parthenon had come over and littered in New York. Temples for banks, temples for insurance offices, temples for garages. If I had my way I'd go over to Greece and blow up the Erechtheum, and that would put about seventy-five thousand American architects out of business for life. Anyone would think all the architects were women. There are only two men in the United States with Gothic minds. It takes a man to build a groined arch!"

In music, also, he dared to walk without a guide. An evening at the Chinese theater set him a-wondering. "What's everybody so afraid of discords for?" he asked afterwards. "They're all slaves to the old forms and the old intervals. What difference does it make if G flat vibrates thirty-two thousand times a second and A sharp forty-one thousand, or whatever it is? You can prove there's a mathematical ratio that's what we call harmony, but you can't prove some other ratio won't give some other kind of a psychological effect, can you? These French fellows, now, are getting on to that. De Bussy and all that crowd. They've discovered the matter is with their ears. Our ears are not educated up to it yet, that's all. I've heard there's some kind of insect notes so high we can't hear them. Well, there can be some kind of harmonies so new and subtle we can't understand 'em, can't there? I could show 'em how if I had time."

Lady Méchante was one, at least, who quite believed him capable of it.

Before he had turned his third corner Lady Méchante had, in an idle moment, planned for him a literary career. She knew what marvelous chances the beginner had in America; how, when the work of old established writers was rejected, the first sign of a new writer from Oshkosh or Barriboo would be hailed

with wild acclaim by the editors. The manuscript might be rejected, but the author would be welcomed with complimentary letters requesting the sight of all future work; and, if the second contribution was tolerable, special envoys, literary confidence men, were sent out to lunch and dine the newborn celebrity. Blurbed into a moment's scintillating fame, how many a young star she had seen rise, glitter and fall back into the dark!

She had even blocked out for him a series of stories that should begin his career—little masterpieces of originality and unconventionality. There was one for *Wilson's* about a heroic brakeman who climbed over the tender, half burned to death in a forest fire, and rescued the engineer. There was the story of a coward whose physical fear was adroitly contrasted with his spiritual courage. There was a football story, for a November number, in which the despised Freshman scored a touchdown for his eleven. There was a story of very poor whites who spoke unintelligible dialect, one of a tender-hearted cowboy with red hair—and so on. In all these she used for a title the Inverted Possessive dear to the editor's soul, usually the "Rehabilitation of Somebody."

These rough sketches she had cast aside for poetry, for, while he was but partly evolved, it pleased her fancy to speculate upon the kind of verse he would be likely to indite.

Long afterwards she picked a manuscript out of a pigeonhole of her *escritoire* and showed it to him.

"Here!" she said. "This is what I was going to have you pull out of your inside pocket some night at Highbrow Hall. What do you think of it? Would you have been proud to acknowledge the authorship?" She read it to him, mimicking his smaggish manner:

"Blood of the meat—
Soul of the flesh, striving in sinew and
gristle,
Burrowing bone,
Lusty in fatherhood, riotous giver of life—
Crassly I crunch at the corpse,
Drinking its force,
Robbing the strength of the beast!

Lo, thou hast robbed of the grasses,
Soul of their flesh!
Lo, they have sifted the rocks
To capture the spirit of Life!
Dwell in my carcass and build it
Ere in the round of thy going
Back to the earth that hath whelped me,
Little and weak,
Thin through the leaf and the stalk,
Thou climbest thy path to fulfillment."

Smagg scowled, reached for it and looked it over. Then he pointed to a word. "I never would have said 'capture.'"

Lady Méchante shrieked. "That's a fact. Of course you wouldn't. Bless your big Anglo-Saxon heart! I believe you've picked out the only Latin word in the poem. I would like to see what you would write now if you tried." Smagg in his orbit was now rounding the focus of its parabola.

Smagg gloomed for a while, then paced the floor heavily. He stopped suddenly once or twice, glared at her and went on. He walked to the window and looked out, rubbed his nose against the pane, then thoughtfully inspected the grease spot on the glass. He snapped his fingers and came back, stopped and tapped his toes and scowled again. He exhibited, in short, all the tricks and manners of a minor poet absorbed in composition.

Lady Méchante watched him with infinite amusement. "Can you do it?" she asked. "Did you catch a sight of your muse out of the window?"

He shoved his hands in his pockets and his soul shot out of his eyes, terrible.

"How can I do it?" he demanded. "How can anybody do it that's decent? Poetry is the language of feeling, ain't it? You can't put it into words. Even them pictures of mine don't put it into words; no more does music. Nobody means what they say when they write lyrics; if they did they ought to be ashamed of themselves. When you have a feeling that's poetic it's like having a woman you're in love with. No man as is a man wants to go to work and expose it for everybody to stare at. If I thought poets meant every word they wrote, I'd kick one down the stairs for a cad when he come to see me.

"All the same," he continued, "I'll give it to you, if you want to hear it; but you understand this is something sacred and holy; it's a part of the mystery of my own being; it's the sort of thing one doesn't confess:

"My shirt is sticky and clings to my back,
Gawd, my Gawd, but I'd like to cry!
I got up at night and stepped on a tack,
Gawd, but I want to die!

"I seen a guy with a light blue scarf,
Gawd, my Gawd, but I'd like to cry!
And a pretty girl with a horrid laugh,
Gawd, but I want to die!"

"Ah, I see," said Lady Méchante, the tears in her eyes. "It's wonderfully beautiful. You are right. These are quite the things a delicate person hesitates to confess. And rhythmic, of course. That's where I failed. I forgot that all prehistoric poetry is rhythmic. In yours I hear the cadenced rune of the ancient tribal dances. I can almost hear the tom-toms and see the naked forms in the firelight. I should have known you would be atavistic."

"Say," Smagg exclaimed suddenly, "what do you think old lady Van Dream told me today? Said she wanted me to marry Dolly."

Lady Méchante jumped up. "Not really?" What was there in her look now that had not been there before? Something slumbering awoke. Her breath came quickly.

"What did you say?"

"I said, 'Not much!' or, leastways, I'd think it over. What I meant was, I'd ask you. What do you think?"

"What do *you* think?" she asked eagerly.

"Oh, she's got money and plenty of hair—that's the main thing. But I rather prefer the old lady, myself. More to her. Besides, she's on to things. Dolly might do—so long as I couldn't possibly—I mean, of course—"

"What ever *do* you mean?" said Lady Méchante.

Smagg walked off to the window again, found the grease spot still there on the pane, and gazed at it morosely. "I don't know what I do mean; only sometimes I feel funny."

She watched him through half closed lids, then turned away and sighed. "I expect you had better marry her, Haulick," she said decidedly. Her lips closed tightly.

"All right," said Haulick, "I'll propose to her tomorrow."

He did propose on the morrow, heavy-heartedly enough, but with sufficient unction to impress Miss Van Dream, who, warned by her mother, had lain awake half the night wondering what she should say to him. What she did say was merely that she wanted time. She wasn't ready yet to decide so important a question. Little Emily, she knew, would have snapped him up in a minute. Almost every other girl in her set would, smaggery or no smaggery. There was, in itself, she admitted, good reason for taking him. She began to feel the man himself, now, more strongly than his art; but there was something too clever about him. There was no knowing where such a cat would jump.

So Smagg went away, not too disheartened at being put off.

He had hardly gone before James, the footman, appeared to take away the tea things. He had been in and out during the whole interview and, as Dolly Van Dream, with characteristic *aplomb*, had ignored his presence as a human being, he had heard the whole conversation through with imperturbable gravity. Smagg's one failing had always been a fear of servants—public waiters excepted—and he would have become awkwardly embarrassed had his proposal been more enthusiastic. But Smagg had been plunged in gloomy thoughts, of which the reader is supposed to know nothing. James had waited a decent interval after this tender episode, and now laid his tray on the table and approached his mistress with a sentimental expression upon the face which so long had been masked in sobriety.

"I'd like to speak to you, Miss Van Dream, if I might be so bold," he said.

Dolly raised her eyebrows and regarded him with surprise. "Why,

what is it, James? Have you anything to complain of? Aren't they giving you real cream in your coffee, or what is it? I hope you are not going to tell me you want to marry one of the maids."

"No, Miss Van Dream, it's not one of the maids I wish to marry. It's *you*, if you don't mind my saying it."

"James, I hope you haven't been helping yourself to the brandy! I gave strict orders that it was to be kept locked up."

James shook his head. "No, Miss Van Dream. It isn't the brandy. If I'm intoxicated, it's you that's done it, in a way of speaking."

How he restrained himself! How hard he strived to copy the manner of the best English servants as depicted in the best Society novels! He longed to lapse into dialect, to say "mem," and to drop his "h's," but he was not yet sure of the proper idiom and accent. He did his best with the few of Hallroom's novels he had been able to read.

"I don't think you quite know what you are saying, James," said Dolly, rising and looking about her uneasily.

"I do know what I'm saying, Miss Van Dream, for I have said it often enough to myself. I have been in this house and in your service, man and boy, for two weeks; and it was a long, long time before I could make bold to tell you about it. But I love you, Miss Van Dream, and, if you would be contented to marry a poor man, so far beneath you, I can offer you a heart, Miss Van Dream, that has as much devotion as you have dollars. I am afraid I can't put it very well to the likes of you, but I've heard tell you're a Socialist and I went and joined the Party so's to be able to call you 'comrade' without being accused of disrespect. It's on the plane of our common humanity and the cause of labor that I appeal to you, Miss Van Dream—I beg your pardon—comrade!"

Dolly had listened at first with amusement, then with increasing impatience to scornful fury. She was about to order him out of the room

when the first word of his peroration caused her to stop and tremble. Her hand flew to her heart. Dolly, the last two weeks, had become as fiery a little Socialist as ever spoke on a street corner. True, she never had spoken on a street corner, for her comrades were theorists of the parlor variety, who had taken it up in a dreamy sort of way, mainly on account of Bernard Shaw. Even thus, however, there was magic in the name "comrade," and she dared not consider herself insulted.

"You're quite right, of course, in speaking to me, Comrade James, and your sentiments do you honor. I know I am thoroughly fascinating, and it's no wonder that you couldn't stand the strain for long. I'm not surprised that you have broken down under it. In fact, I've noticed for several days that your manner had changed. You winked quite conspicuously yesterday as you passed the fish. Mamma noticed it and thought you were ill. So I think, on the whole, you'd better change your work for something out of doors, where I won't trouble you so much. Can you do anything else but footmaning?"

"I can drive an automobile," said James, hanging his head.

"Very well, then, I'll see about making you a chauffeur. That Frenchman we've had eloped last night with my Aunt Harriet, as you may have heard. If you'll promise not to elope, James—Comrade James, I beg your pardon—I'll see that you are installed. But you must live in the coach house, and you mustn't expect any increase in wages."

James took up his tray, placed on it a plate of nibbled tea cakes and walked out of the room, his shattered hopes torturing his breast.

IX

WHAT was the matter with Smagg? Still he pursued his social orbit with increasing splendor, pursued breathlessly by a comet's tail of débutantes, widowettes and marrying mammas.

Still in the studios the proselytizing for Smagg's new order of art went on. He was called "the Master" by many of the younger female art students at the League. True, their attempts at imitation could be received at no regular *salon*, but an independent exhibition had been held, producing a surfeit of Smaggery. In both these worlds, Dolly Van Dream followed him, still unable to make up her mind, still unable to distinguish between the genius and the man.

But of late she thought she noticed a slight recrudescence of his smaggery. At one time it was nothing more than the production of a red bandanna handkerchief; at another it was the omission of the handkerchief altogether after a particularly violent sneeze. Smagg, by this time, was a sufficiently important figure to be able to do pretty much what he liked, but what he liked to do was singularly reminiscent of his earlier smaggishness, with the difference that, nowadays, he seemed to do it consciously and with defiance. Of this attitude, one of his early *gaucheries* was symbolic. He not only upset his cup on the floor, but he stamped viciously on the fragments. There was that same vicious note in his present mental state. He rubbed things in. She wondered what it meant.

She followed his progress from call to call, to theaters, teas, receptions, house parties, and noticed that he seemed more and more sullen; his badinage often frightened the buds, tough as they had become by the end of the season's dissipation. The young married women, inured to the persistent attacks of male flirts, fair game, now they were wedded, for all sorts of surreptitious amorous annoyance, found Smagg a terror in quite a new way. His mockery of the matrons, his derision of the dowagers, had become blatant, almost offensive. People said he was spoiled, but Dolly knew better. Some yeast was working in his brain.

"Do you know, you haven't paid your dinner call on Mrs. Pendulous yet?" she said to him one day. "It's two weeks since you were there."

"What do I want to go there for?" said Smagg. "The dinner was bad enough, let alone calling again."

"But you *have* to go," Dolly insisted.

"Why, if I don't want to?"

"Because it's the thing to do. You must pay your social debts."

"But she invited me herself. I didn't want to go, anyway."

"Oh, we all have to do a great many things we don't want to do."

He thought about it sulkily. "I don't see the good of being in Society, then," he grumbled.

"I think I'm very lucky to be able to get down to my studio twice a week," Dolly went on. "I'm fearfully behind in my calls now, and I've got to give at least six more dinners and two big receptions to even up my score. I think you ought to consider yourself lucky."

"You'll be sayin' I've got to go to Emily's theater party next, and sit around for three hours in the back of the box when I want to be home in bed."

"Well, if you keep it up as well as you have you'll soon get to the point where you'll be invited to everything and won't have to go to anything, and that's the goal we all hope to reach in time."

"I don't see the fun in being invited to things you don't want to go to. Sounds like nonsense to me."

If Dolly was puzzled at these symptoms of Smagg's uneasiness, Lady Méchante was more so. When he was with her, however, Smagg's demeanor took another air. She was almost frightened at times, and in her encounters she needed every art and ruse with which that fantastic lady was familiar. He would stop suddenly and glower upon her, showing his teeth under his tense upper lip. At times she almost expected this reconstructed cave man to drag her off by the hair of her head to his lair. In point of fact, he did grab her by the wrist savagely enough once; but then the lady's eyes were stilettos, and he cowered and apologized. She had to acknowledge that he was more and more difficult to cope with, like a kitten grown into a wild cat. Success had given him confidence. Was the distance lessening between them?

she thought. Was she, at the top of the spiral, now in closer proximity than ever to Smagg at the bottom, one whole round of the circle behind her? Strangely they had thrilled to the same themes, he the barbarian, she the effete. What he had looked up to she had looked down upon, but now at times she seemed to meet his gaze full on the level. How long would her brains be a match for his brute strength and will?

He came and went now, his own master. Once or twice he had even offered her advice—her, Lady Méchante, who had played with cities, with societies, with religions, in her time; whose touch was magic, whose fancy was immortal! She had had a queer, numb feeling when he had offered that advice. What if he gave her his orders? What if he forced her will? Already she seemed to hear a warning, like the music of a rattlesnake's tail. It made her numb, indeed, but it awoke a strange, outrageous delight in her which she had never known before.

It was early in May when Lady Méchante drove up to the Van Dreams' in her Pancake to have a talk with Dolly and see how far she had noticed the change. On the pavement she found the new chauffeur at the wheel of the tremendous yellow limousine car of the Van Dreams. At first she did not know him in his leathern uniform, but when she recognized him she went up immediately to ascertain the cause.

Wrestling Brewster Bradford, too, had changed. He told her of his proposal. "And, do you know," he said, "on thinking it over, I'm sure I shouldn't have liked it at all if she had accepted me as a footman. Why, I would have distrusted every servant I ever had, once I was married to her. No, I wanted her to like me for myself alone, and I'm now thoroughly ashamed of it. I owe a debt to my ancestry and have no right to leave the Veterans of Shay's Rebellion out of the question. I'm as much a Scion as I am myself, it seems to me. I am as much a Descendant of the Survivors of the Indian Massacres as I am Wrestling Brewster Bradford.

Haven't Elder Brewster, the Pilgrim, and Wrestling, his son, any respect due them? What would the Colonial Skirmishers think? Then, again, my sister is to be considered. Would she want her brother accepted as a footman? The fact is, it's all horribly complicated on account of the aristocracy of my lineage. I've decided to wait until I've got all the material necessary for my book—there are a lot of secrets in the Van Dream family that I haven't wormed out of the butler yet. Then I'm going to propose to her as a gentleman. I suppose she will be frightened to death, but I'll try and make it as easy as I can for her. She never will be a Scion of Shay's Rebellion, but her son will be."

"I think you are quite right," said Lady Méchante, "but I hope you will break it to her gently. Can't you begin with the Mexican War, say, and work gradually back? I wouldn't let her know that your family is more than two or three generations old, at first. I'd be very careful how I approached the seventeenth century, if I were you, and be sure and not mention the Boston Tea Party until she is thoroughly prepared for the shock. When you get to the Plymouth Colony, I beg of you, go slowly and have the smelling salts ready. I'd start from Boston and work my way down the Old Massachusetts Trail along the South Shore. When you get to the Plymouth Rock she'll be ready for the worst."

The running tremor in her voice died out. She smiled saucily and ran up the steps of the chateau. She found Dolly and her mother talking Lenox. They were due at their country house, a spick and span Tudor pile they called "Goldmere," early next week. Smagg had already been invited, and Lady Méchante, when she appeared, was made to say that she would run up with them *en auto* on the coming Monday.

"I see you have a new chauffeur," said she who was still called Mrs. Hellysh. "Are you going to trust yourself to him? He doesn't look intelligent enough to me."

"Oh, my dear, he's remarkably intelligent," said Dolly, "and he knows his place perfectly."

Mrs. Van Dream put in: "He's a perfect servant, really. There must be generations of footmen and butlers behind him, I'm sure. It's written all over him."

So the party was arranged. Lady Méchante, after an unsuccessful attempt to probe the secrets of Dolly's heart, went home to make her preparations for the trip.

They started early in the yellow car, with Wrestling Brewster Bradford at the wheel. Once out of the city, Smagg's face seemed to grow more and more disconsolate every minute, and he harangued the three ladies gloomily.

"What am I going to Lenox for?" he demanded. "I don't want to go. I don't believe you want to go yourselves. It's just because we all *have* to go, ain't it?"

Lady Méchante spoke up. "You may go because you have to, because you are a Society leader and a lion and a Master. Dolly and Mrs. Van Dream have to go because they are harnessed into the chariot and can't escape. But I don't have to go; I don't have to do anything I don't want to. I never have in my life! I'm going because I want to see the fun."

"What fun?" said Haulick Smagg.

"The fun of seeing you outside of New York. I don't believe you've ever been outside of the city before in your life."

"No more have I," he said.

"Why, how absurd!" Mrs. Van Dream put in. "You've told us about Marienbad and Monte Carlo and Versailles and the Lido times enough. Why, I've seen your trunks, even! There isn't a single foreign hotel label on any of them. That's enough of itself to prove you know the Continent thoroughly. And you never speak a word of French or Italian, either. You are fibbing, Mr. Smagg!"

"Oh, I've known a lot of people who can speak French, although they've lived years in Paris," said Dolly.

"You watch him," said Lady Méchante. "Wait till we get out of Bronx Park."

They did watch him, but through a plate glass window, for Smagg, announcing that he was tired of women, and that Mrs. Van Dream's odor of Santal made him sick, rang the electric bell, told the chauffeur to stop, got out, banged the door and took the seat beside Bradford.

They had gone a little way farther when a trunk dropped off the rear of the car. Smagg, defying the chauffeur's polite protest, insisted upon getting out himself to lift it on the rack. The trunk had fallen in a pool of oily tar, which covered the road, and Smagg's hands, for the first time in a month, became actually dirty. With a careless, unconscious gesture he wiped them off roughly on the seat of his light, pearl-colored worsted trousers. He climbed into the front seat again and began to bully the chauffeur, urging him to go faster and run over as many hens as possible. He tried to induce Bradford to let him take the wheel himself, but Bradford's eyes grew as cold as steel.

Within, Lady Méchante's glance never left him. Just this side of Port Chester a front tire blew out with an explosion like a pistol shot. Bradford did not decline Smagg's aid this time, and the two of them worked for half an hour in the sun with a refractory shoe before it was clinched and fastened and the inner tube pumped up. Smagg insisted upon doing most of the hard work, and by the time the job was finished the knees of the light pearl worsted trousers aroused Dolly Van Dream's mirth. Smagg had doffed his coat and had laid it on the asphalt. When he put it on there was a large oily X on the small of its back. There was oil, also, upon Smagg's arms and under his left eye; his hair lacked that slick assurance of arrangement and particularly the curl that Lady Méchante had ever objected to, and which she had named the "hoodlum twist."

But somehow Smagg himself seemed rejuvenated, happier and more buoy-

ant. The terrific oaths which had caused Mrs. Van Dream hurriedly to pull up the sash in the door had ended. Smagg clapped the chauffeur lustily upon the back and invited him to a saloon just visible up the street. Wrestling Brewster Bradford, looking fearful and embarrassed, accompanied him. Lady Méchante jumped up and opened the door, about to call them back, but Mrs. Van Dream pulled her down.

When they returned Smagg strutted. His eyes were light and his spirit was strong. In his mouth was a smack of beer—the first he had tasted since he had sold his soul into slavery. Hilari-ously he hopped upon the seat and bade the chauffeur chase himself. On they sped along the Old Boston Road, while Smagg laughed and sang aloud and told infamous tales to the descendant of the Pilgrims.

The road was narrow and wound in sharp curves up and down hill. Smagg lurched from side to side, not drunk, but exhilarated. That touch of hops was working in him mysteriously. The sight of his dirty hands had begun to call up memories of freedom, careless joyance. The very smears on his clothes thrilled him with forgotten delights. He had sweated with his labor, the first manual work he had done for long, and now the cool breeze caressed his damp temples. He turned round and gazed in through the plate glass window at Lady Méchante with a yellow glow in his eyes like a tiger's. The car suddenly came to a stop and Smagg looked around.

They were at the bottom of a sharp curving rise in the narrow road, and, a hundred feet ahead he saw a coal wagon with one hind wheel off, overturned on the road. Its cargo had escaped in a huge pile that entirely filled the thoroughfare. With such narrow passage and the up grade, it was impossible to pass. The only way round, the chauffeur informed him, had diverged ten miles behind them. What was to be done?

Haulick Smagg was equal to the exigency. He left the car and strode up to the driver, who was sitting in the shade of the wagon waiting for reinforcements.

"Got a shovel?" said Smagg.

"I got a shovel all right. What d'ye want with it?"

"I want to move this coal," said Smagg.

"Go on, you can't shovel coal!" the driver mocked. "You're nothing but a gentleman!"

"A what?" said Smagg.

"A gent—" The driver got no further, for Smagg's heavy hand had closed his mouth. The driver got up as far as his knees, but was promptly knocked down again.

Smagg seized a shovel, looked it over carefully, hefted it with delicate appreciation, then brandished it aloft like a battle-axe rescued from his grandsire's tomb. He thrust it at the hillside as if he would move the mountain; he chopped out a piece of cloud from the sky and tossed it over his shoulder into the Atlantic, miles away. Then, in a Berserk fury, he attacked the coal.

The yellow car drew stealthily and cautiously up to watch his labor.

The coal flew steadily from his shovel in a sparkling cascade. He stood in the middle of the pile, knee deep, and his weapon scooped and thrust with lightninglike regularity. He was like a human engine, revolving at the rate of a hundred strokes a minute. Occasionally, in the wantonness of his joy, he would hurl a shovelful high over his head, or toward the Van Dreams' car. He began to wallow to right and left, plowing furrows in the anthracite. He had stripped off his coat at the beginning and soon he tore off his vest, plucked out a striped Madras shirt and threw it away. In short-sleeved undershirt at last, and with his pink satin suspenders knotted round his waist for a belt, he rested for a moment and looked about him.

Lady Méchante had already left the car and stood watching him, fascinated. Dolly stood on the running board, the tail of her skirt held firmly by Mamma Van Dream, her eyes fixed on the laborer. Wrestling Brewster Bradford, in his leathern coat, gazed impassively at the exhibition.

The pile was lowered to half its

height now and a dusty smoke enveloped the heroic figure. His neck and head and arms were bathed with sweat. It had caught the drifting particles and colored him with a light coat of black. From his hands to his elbows he was like a negro. He went to work still more savagely. The beer sang in his veins. It felt good to sweat. The lust for labor became a passion. He looked neither to right nor left, only at the diminishing talus beneath his feet. He was at home again, he who had sold this precious, grimy birthright for a mess of pottage.

Dolly Van Dream could stand it no longer. With a wrench she tore herself free, leaving a handful of ecru Valenciennes in old lady Van Dream's clutch, and sprang forward to the bottom of the heap of coal. In her breath, also, something new fluttered. There was a wild excitement there, conjured by the strangeness of the sight.

She had never seen a man work before, at least, never a man she had known, and to see Smagg's titanic toil moved her potently. More than this, the pristine power of the primitive appealed to her soul. The immemorial desire for mastery agitated her woman's heart. Primordial and paramount in this magnificent exhibition of physical endeavor, she perceived Smagg as a man, a mate, a master. With a wild, stifled cry on her lips, she waded up through the lumps that shifted and slid beneath her feet, reached him and threw her arms about his neck.

"Haulick," she sobbed, "you are magnificent! I love you! I accept you! I'll give you your answer now!" And she held her lips to his.

With a consummate Delancey Street oath, he hit her behind the ear and hurled her to the bottom of the pile. Then he shook his fist over her prostrate form.

"Accept me, do you?" he thundered. "I wouldn't marry you, you broom-haired doll, for a ton of coal! I'm through with yer, an' yer whole crowd! The whole thing's a sham from top to bottom. There isn't a real man or a real woman north of Fourteenth Street!

I've had enough of Society; I'm on to it now! You're all doing what you don't want to do, an' thinking what you're told to think, an' saying what the rest say, an' paying four times what everything's worth to make a show. What I want is men and women with blood in their necks! When I want a wife I'll get somethin' beside a corset and a lot of false hair and a visiting card."

He turned his head slowly and beheld Lady Méchante, who stood in the posture of an attendant angel, but with an amiable devil looking out of her eyes. Her hand was slightly outstretched, the fingers tentatively extended as if awaiting him. Fragile and dainty and delicate as she was, one could perceive that her soul was as tense as a tightly stretched spring. She was quiet, with the quiet of a rapidly revolving wheel. One could almost see her aura, faintly luminous, enshrouding her. For a moment she stood there, a living miracle of loveliness and grace; then she reached forth her hand and she spoke, scarcely above her breath:

"Haulick Smagg, come! I want you!"

He waded to her and put his arm about her waist.

"I know," she said. "I have dwelt in your world, too. You have proved yourself and you are mine. Come, and let me come with you, back to freedom, back to truth, back to reality, back to Delancey Street and the Submerged Tenth." She drew a lace pocket handkerchief from her purse, wiped off his lips and kissed him.

Dolly Van Dream had risen to her feet and stood, in her lace gown, streaked from chin to toe with coal dust. Wrestling Brewster Bradford came running up to help her. As she turned to him, her eye caught sight of a red and blue button in his buttonhole.

"The Loyal Legion!" she gasped.

He tore off his leather coat, unbuttoned his jacket and smiled. There was an eagle pendant on the end of his watch chain.

"My God! The Society of the Cincinnati! Is it possible that you are a

gentleman? Oh, take me away from this monster!"

He drew her gently away from the wreck, hurried her into the limousine, jumped to his seat and started the machinery. The car plunged forward. The exhaust barked like musketry, and with a fierce burst of speed the vehicle jumped at the coal pile, crushed through it and swept up the hill out of sight.

"Now that we are alone," said Lady Méchante, "you may kiss me. Kiss me like a cave man, Haulick, if you will! Kiss me as I've never been kissed before; then take me by the hair of my head and drag me into your cave!"

When it was over Haulick Smagg looked about and perceived two horses, black Percherons, tethered to a tree. He walked over to them, drawing a knife from his pocket as he went.

Lady Méchante looked up the hill toward the cloud of dust, raised by the flying wheels of the Van Dreams' limousine. Softly she spoke to herself, as the cloud thinned and floated away into space:

"From the partial impact of two dead stars new worlds are born!"

Haulick Smagg came forward, sitting his ponderous black Percheron. Gently he stooped; lightly he lifted her to a seat in front of him. Then he dug his heels in the horse's flanks.



THE MINOR MELODY

By CLARE GIFFIN

LOVE, I have never once forgotten you;
Not once in all the weariness of years.
Deep in my heart a pain too keen for tears
Has kept its place, though many a happy day
Claimed gladness as its due.

Through every joy a sadness of regret,
A swift rememb'ring of one perfect May
Is ever with me;

I am one who hears
A minor melody, unending, sad
And very sweet; loves it and yet must weep.

And I would not forget
A single moment of that perfect time.
So long ago it seems to me; and yet
It makes that mournful music, soft and deep
At first, with tender memories, that must climb
At last to wailing passion, agony
Of hopelessness and utter misery.

Yet I keep
That memory in my heart a precious thing,
More sweet for all the sorrow it can bring,
For all the passion that it wakes from sleep.

THE RESTORATION OF MISS WILLY MACNEAL

By ALGERNON TASSIN

THAT Mrs. Oswald Trevelyan was the oldest living actress on the American stage, or, rather, off it, was no fault of hers, but she had found it for many years a heavy misfortune. Indeed, this was the only visitation of Providence that she had ever had cause to regret, since life and time—in other ways—had dealt very partially with her. The one had left no record whatever on her childlike, gentle face, and the other, beyond netting it with the most delicate wrinkles conceivable, had only embellished it with the most beautiful setting a rose-leaf skin may have, a crown of silver. Yet in spite of all this, for many years she had felt that fate was unkind to her. And rightly, for, like Othello, she had found her occupation gone.

It seemed that there was nothing on earth for a lady with Mrs. Oswald Trevelyan's position—and with her figure—to play. For she was by no means a *grande dame* in appearance. It would have been quite impossible to suppose her the mother or even the grandmother of the leading man. At a pinch, she might have been his aunt—but then aunts are scarcer in leading men's families than they are in the rest of the world. Never in all her seventy years' experience (for of course Mrs. Oswald Trevelyan had been a stage baby) had she encountered the aunt of a leading man that she would have deigned to play. In the old days when people still wrote soubrette plays, and twinkling soubrettes were the darlings of an antique public, she had been

famous from coast to coast; and her name was even now in the lumber room of everybody's memory and mentioned so often in magazine reminiscences that young people—those few whose mothers had not adored her—conceived of her as an antebellum institution. Her strongest point was a rapid and subtle transition—"exquisitely and imperceptibly graded," the dean of American critics had phrased it—from humor to pathos and *vice versa*, and plays were carpentered for her on purpose to exhibit this specialty. But long since the taste had changed, and what was there now for an elderly ex-soubrette to play?

Imagine the tiniest woman alive—alas, now well-nigh as broad as she was long—with a voice and a face that had not thickened with her figure and were still making their subtle transition from laughter to tears. It was her voice, indeed, which had been the ruin of her later days. If she could have kept the tears out of it she might have played comic parts suitable to her dimensions; or—if you care to put it the other way—if she could have kept the tears in her figure to go with those in her voice, she might still have been serviceable. But as it was, her pristine glory had become her nemesis—no manager wanted her. She had also another embarrassing possession. She had retained the wonderful abundance of hair which for three generations had been the talk of the continent. An indescribable golden auburn it had been, much too long to wear in the familiar soubrette ringlets;

but somewhere, in every one of the pieces which had made her a household word in the long ago, had been contrived a scene where she might shake it down amid the envious gasps of her feminine beholders and the ecstasy of every man in the theater and stand completely enveloped in the shimmering, wavy veil, peeping shyly out from the cascade—like a girl in a fountain—in a way that was irresistibly endearing. However poor the piece was, this would have saved the night.

All this wealth of hair had grown silvery now, its color lost, but little of its abundance and none of its luster. And this was another nemesis. Conceive, if you can, of puff after puff of silken white hair piled like a gleaming tiara on an almost rectangular comedy figure, already handicapped with a voice that kept unsuitably shifting into tears at the oddest of moments. Or, to put it in another way—for you ought to see Mrs. Oswald Trevelyan quite plainly—the head of a French Revolution comtesse stepping proudly to the guillotine, upon the body of a washerwoman, whose arms, on the stage at least, should never be anything else but akimbo. If she could have brought herself to wear a wig things might possibly have been different. But she had never worn one in all her life, and the thought of it was an obsession. "No, my dear," she would say, "though I starve, I shall go down into my grave without ever having put on one of the nasty things. I will not deprive the public in my old age of what in my youth was their delight, and what, if I may say it in an impersonal way, is quite capable of filling the house now!" Indeed, she could not see why a scene shouldn't be contrived for her nowadays—it might easily be done by means of burglars and things—in which the leading man's mother or grandmother should stand enveloped in her hair. At her age it would be all the more of a sensation, but then modern managers were so perverse and had so little imagination! So you see, all things considered, Mrs. Oswald Trevelyan at the age of seventy was in the curious posi-

tion of having saved too many of her youthful charms. She had grown old too greenly.

"Though I starve," was an expression Mrs. Trevelyan was in the habit of using in reference to the exactions of managers and the modern riffraff that knew her not, but it was not to be interpreted literally. She had never in her rich days—and small wonder—contemplated a time when anybody should cease to want her, but she had now a little income which was quite sufficient to maintain her modestly in the modest boarding house far over on West Forty-second Street in which she had elected to dwell. It was not an actors' boarding house, and Mrs. Trevelyan had taken particular care to ascertain beforehand that no person of the profession had ever set foot across its threshold. "Not that I do not love my kind, my dear," she would often say; "but nobody else lives in batches, so why should we?" No, it was emphatically not an actors' boarding house, though Mrs. Trevelyan always desired to pitch her tent upon the banks of the current Rialto, and in the twenty-five years she had been laid upon the shelf she had migrated several times in the endeavor to keep pace with the uptown march of the theatrical district. In its way Mrs. Trevelyan's friends had considered this almost as serio-comic as her misfit hair and voice. Indeed, the spectacle of an elderly ex-soubrette pursuing a fleeting Rialto was in a sense both allegorical and pathetic, according to one's capacity for symbolism or sympathy. But when she had moved into the Forty-second Street house and had found it so exactly in her world and not of it, and both congenial and genteel, she set her foot down. "I shall not move again, my dear," said she to her neighbor across the hall. "If I am left hopelessly behind, I shall not move again. Though I starve, I shall go down to my grave from here!"

Every new servant girl was immediately instructed that if any letters came for Miss Willy MacNeal they were to be given to Mrs. Oswald Trevelyan.

The servant girls always tittered over this order until they were informed that Miss Willy MacNeal had been a great actress whom people once went wild about, and that she and Mrs. Trevelyan were one and the same person. Then they were properly awed and gazed at that lady with furtive reverence and hoped that they might some day actualize the ancient grandeur, so far at least as to deliver a letter inscribed with the historic name. But no such letter had ever been left at the house within the last servant girl's memory, and the one before her had told her the same thing. Willy! Can you imagine a redundant crown of silver hair and a broadening figure of seventy answering to the name of Willy? Yet Mrs. Oswald Trevelyan would as soon have committed any other sacrilege as to part with it—sooner, perhaps. This was another obstacle to her getting an engagement. Often of late years she had had the experience she was today relating to her neighbor across the hall.

"There is a part in a new piece, my dear, which I have just made overtures for. Of course a person in my position has a certain dignity to keep up. I have to be exceedingly discreet in letting it be known that I would accept an engagement. Too discreet, perhaps, to be profitable." Her voice sighed and her violet eyes twinkled in their famous compromise between humor and plainiveness. "It is a part which would just suit me, though very small, as all parts are nowadays, save those of the leading man and woman. Oh, this wretched star system!" interpolated Mrs. Trevelyan, as if she had quite forgotten the days when Miss Willy MacNeal spoke every other word in the piece. "And the manager said, 'Why, Miss MacNeal, the star wouldn't let me build out that bit into a part worthy of you, and to put your name on the bill for a scrap like that would subject both you and me to criticism we shouldn't care for—although it is true your name would be of decided commercial advantage and would bring much free advertising. If you would consent to appearing as Mrs. Trevelyan now—'

'Never!' said I firmly, 'though I starve.' 'Then,' he answered, 'the only thing to do is to wait until a piece comes along with a part in it such as'—he positively stammered, my dear—'such as you are now fitted to play, and of sufficient prominence to warrant a manager's offering and your accepting it. In the meantime'—he bowed uncomfortably, my dear, but, I must say, with grace and credit to himself—'in the meantime, there is unfortunately a great actress lost to the stage.' So you see, my dear, that is the way I am constantly shunted off. I can get nothing."

"But, my dear Mrs. Trevelyan," ventured her friend deferentially, "why should you wish to act again? It is not as if you really needed to do so. And"—she looked around for diplomatic words, but finding none, infused more deference into her tone in that way ladies have of simply turning a statement into a series of interrogations—"and it is so much better, isn't it, to have left the stage with one's greatest triumphs."

"My dear," said Mrs. Trevelyan magnificently, but in a hurt voice which signally illustrated her specialty for conveying plainly two opposing sentiments at once, "I could triumph now quite as well as ever I did, and the triumph would be more unique. I could mention a dozen names in the glorious annals of the stage that made their greatest hits at my time of life. The illustrious Macklin set all London mad with a new interpretation of Macbeth at the age of eighty-four—an interpretation which, I may remark, has been followed ever since. Ah, those were the good old days!"

"But," her friend ventured again on another tack, "you are not as strong as you were. Surely it must be a very laborious life."

"It is my vocation, my dear," said Mrs. Trevelyan. "You have never been a professional or you would understand. Besides, shall I confess to you what for twenty-five years has been the one ambition of my life?" She leaned forward and murmured the words impressively. "To die in harness! Yes,"

she continued, straightening herself in her chair, "and during all those twenty-five years I have never once had the chance to act. Here am I, as good an actress as ever I was, and there is the stage—goodness knows in need of one! But where is the harness? For twenty-five years I have been looking for it. I shall go down to my grave without a harness!" She whisked away a tear and adjusted her puffs solemnly.

"But perhaps a part will come along," said her friend in a soothing voice. "You never can tell."

"Perhaps, my dear. But it must be of sufficient prominence for Miss Willy MacNeal. Both manager and I, it seems, must insist upon that. Though I do not care, as long as I die with my own name in the bills. And what parts are they nowadays? In a company now there is but one star, and the rest are the Milky Way." Mrs. Trevelyan laughed, feeling she had achieved an apt figure. Her laughter made her friend jump, so suddenly it shot up like a little flame from the ashes of her previous tone. "No," she concluded with a bewildering transition into mournfulness, "there is no chance unless they dramatize some book they can't cut me out of. And even then," she added, "the star will sit up nights trying to do it. He will take all the fat out of it and leave me all the lean—like Jack Sprat!" Her voice rose again as she realized that for the second time she had achieved a good comparison; then gloom settled again darkly as she amended: "Or his wife—whichever one of them it was."

When her neighbor had recovered her equilibrium after so many abrupt, though never so graded, shifts from the heights to the depths of the emotional scale—for, as the dean of American critics had once said, you had to accompany Miss Willy MacNeal's aerial transitions whether you would or no, and were sometimes put to it to follow in your clumsy mundane fashion when the laughter overtook the tears or the tears the laughter; when her neighbor had breathlessly recovered her spiritual poise, her face lit up suddenly. "Oh!"

she cried. "Here is a book I have just been reading. It's been one of the six best sellers for ever so long, and it's bound to be dramatized. And one of the leading characters is the hero's maiden aunt. She is so mixed up in the story that they can't cut her out."

Mrs. Trevelyan took fire at once, but she paused long enough in the midst of her ascending flame to interject tragically, "Ah, my dear, you don't know them!"—then went on and upward again in white heat.

"I thought of you all the time I was reading it," cried her neighbor, the excitement communicating. She paused in some confusion. The physical description of the aunt, so insisted upon in the novel, with her squat, square figure surmounted by a boarding school face, had not been at all complimentary. However fine an actress Mrs. Trevelyan might be, did she want to exploit her aged oddities on the stage? And worse still, would she think that her friend had thought of her only because of that? "The aunt is so droll, so quaint, so pathetic," she hurried on lamely, thinking that when Mrs. Trevelyan came to read the book her pauses would be all too obvious. "And she has some situations only a great actress could handle satisfactorily."

Mrs. Trevelyan had risen feverishly. "Let me see the book, my dear, if you will be so kind." Her voice was even, but it trembled with intensity.

That night she came hurrying in after devouring the story with a ferocity of eagerness. She shut the door carefully behind her and surveyed her friend with the impressiveness of a sybil uttering an oracle. "It is me!" she said. "It is the chance of a lifetime! It is my only hope. I will institute inquiries at once." The hand with which she held out the book was shaking and her violet eyes gleamed with a hard glint which lay oddly in them. Her friend got the impression of a sudden reef in the soft shallows of a mountain lake.

"You should have seen how dear Mrs. Trevelyan looked," she confided in the morning to her next best friend on

the second floor. "Of course one hears everywhere about the extraordinary vitality and youth of actresses. But if she's kept her looks and her hair like that, why shouldn't she have kept her power too? I think she might really be great in the part!"

Before night everybody in the boarding house knew that Mrs. Trevelyan had expectations, and that Miss Willy MacNeal might once more ornament the stage. Even the new servant girl, as she handed the potatoes, did so with a greater deference. The boarding house loved Mrs. Trevelyan and was immensely proud of far-away Miss Willy MacNeal. Not an inmate of it but bubbled with excitement at the thought that the two might be merged into one again behind the mysterious footlights. Nobody had ever seen her so animated and busy or beheld at dinner so many shifts of the protean voice. Day after day they made tactful inquiries. "Thank you, my dear," Mrs. Trevelyan would respond. "But it's all in the air. Nothing seems to have been done yet even about dramatizing the book. I cannot ascertain that any manager has yet taken it up. I am just looking around a little, that is all. Are there any letters for me? For Miss Willy MacNeal?" But as time wore on and there were no letters and Mrs. Trevelyan's step grew less springy on her going out and coming in—especially the latter—her friends sighed and began to put fewer inquiries. They could not bear to force into her childish violet eyes the brave look of a forlorn hope, and when they did so they found the rapid transitions from pathos to laughter extremely trying.

One day, as Mrs. Trevelyan entered the house with a step that was dragging more and more of late, the servant girl came running to her with a bounce which showed she had been on the lookout. "Oh, ma'am!" she cried. "Mrs.—Miss! Here's a letter, Mrs. Trevelyan, for Miss Willy MacNeal."

"Thank you, Nora, my dear," said Mrs. Trevelyan, and she tore it open with trembling fingers. With lightning eyes she read it rapidly. "Thank you,

my dear." And seeing the girl stood by with breathless interest, she added, "It is good news." She went up the stairs to her neighbor's room.

"My dear!" she cried in triumph. "It's come at last!" She laughed with the curious catch in her voice—a sort of suspension between joy and sorrow. ("I simply never heard anything so emotional as that catch in dear Mrs. Trevelyan's voice," her neighbor confided to her next best friend. "You don't know whether you are going to laugh or cry till she goes on, and you don't know which you'd rather do. It makes me think of 'standing with reluctant feet where the brook and river meet' and wondering which is which.")

Mrs. Trevelyan opened the letter and read it aloud:

"MISS WILLY MACNEAL,

"DEAR MADAM:

"May I request an interview with you on a business matter of some importance, and I trust of mutual advantage? I will do myself the honor of calling at any time you designate. But if you have no preference, I will say Thursday at eleven will be convenient.

"Respectfully yours,

"A. W. MAITLAND.

"The letter head is Slingsby & Maitland's," went on Mrs. Trevelyan. "I have not heard of them, but then there are so many new managers nowadays. The old ones *will* die out. And it is very creditable paper, so it must be a good firm. Their office is on Fifty-ninth Street. Oh, my dear, the Rialto is always moving uptown! Soon I shall be hopelessly behind.

"And they are to call upon *me*! That is most unusual and considerate—quite like the old times. But, oh, my dear! I shall have to receive him in my room. What a pity Mrs. Warren has the parlor! I am now for the first time thankful that my folding bed is thin—it looks very much like a chiffonier, don't you think? And can you lend me your best bureau scarf to put on it? And I wonder if dear Miss Smithers would mind letting me have her silver candlesticks? They will go so beautifully with Mrs. Warren's

shades. Though it will be rather awkward asking her for them without her own shades—a sort of reflection on her taste. I think I will ask them both to lend me their candlesticks and use the sticks of one and the shades of the other. They need not know, for I wouldn't hurt their feelings for the world—they are both so nice. And Miss Sewall's couch cover to throw over the sofa, and there's that beautiful pillow Miss Green has she never lets anybody lean back on. I am sure she would let me have it if I promised to see that he didn't sit down on it—indeed I might take the sofa myself, as it's rather lumpy, you know, anyway. And the pot of azaleas Miss Lucy's young man sent her for her birthday. My dear, I never saw such luck as that girl has in keeping flowers. And azaleas, too! It's love, I tell her. Yes, the room will look charming. Quite like a little boudoir!" And she trotted off to collect her fineries.

The whole household had long since been agog over the unheard of event of a letter for Miss Willy MacNeal, and the significance of the professional name coming at such a time had been understood by all. Thus at every door Mrs. Trevelyan no sooner made known her mission than treasures of all kinds were brought forth from closets and drawers, and she suffered under an embarrassment of riches; so many more things than she could possibly dispose of cost her much artfulness to refuse graciously. As one by one the things were brought up to her she felt herself already back upon the stage again, receiving bouquet after bouquet from nimble ushers—and the oscillations in her voice became so frequent that they quite nonplused the donors, who, although they were quite used to the phenomenon by this time, feared she was really crying until she laughed, and had no sooner joined in her laughter than they felt they had been called upon for tears. When her room was finally decked out to her liking she steadfastly refused to let it be inspected, lest anyone should be hurt by the disposition she had made of the spoil. By

the time the ceremony was over and Nora rehearsed as to the way she should admit the visitor, night had fallen upon a household crackling with expectancy.

The next morning at ten Mrs. Trevelyan sat upon the sofa awaiting her caller. She was attired in her state black silk, to which she had affixed her deep collar and cuffs of yellowed lace, so precious that it rarely saw the light of day. If you had seen her across the table, in her high piled white hair and her rose-leaf face, you would have thought she was Marie Antoinette. For an hour she sat there without moving until his name was announced, and inwardly she commended that nice girl Nora on her excellent performance. She waited until he had well entered—for in a matter of this sort first impressions are everything, and she knew she looked her best when the table made a half-length of her—then with a beating heart she rose. But nothing of her agitation showed upon the surface as she moved quietly a step to meet him and bowed without extending her hand. "Mr. Maitland, I believe?" she said cordially, with just the precise shade of questioning reservation. "Won't you sit down," she continued, carefully guarding the sofa, on which in a moment she reseated herself.

Mr. Maitland was a spruce young gentleman with extremely active and pleasant eyes. With these, as he entered the room, he had shot a look of admiration and satisfaction at Miss MacNeal's regal tiara of silver puffs, and afterwards at her delicate, rose-tinted face. Mr. Maitland's voice proved to be as pleasant and brisk as his eyes.

"I need hardly tell you, Miss MacNeal," he said, "how delighted I am to see you. My mother thinks you were the loveliest thing that ever stepped the earth. I was brought up on you. But I don't think you have ever acted in New York since I got to the theater-going age."

"No," said Miss MacNeal, smilingly, "I have rarely acted of late." She smiled again. "It is difficult, you know, at my age, to find a suitable part."

The young man glanced at her with a slightly startled air. He was only wondering if she were about to laugh or to cry. But Miss MacNeal misunderstood the look.

"Oh, yes," she responded to her conception of it. "I know that I am as good as I ever was, and I should be tempted to prove it if I had a suitable part. But none of your bits!" she added with emphasis.

"I should think not," agreed Mr. Maitland, instantly. "Imagine Miss Willy MacNeal in a bit! It would be a profanation."

Miss MacNeal bowed to the compliment and waited. She felt that here was either a very tractable or a very slick manager; but considered humanly, she liked his looks very much. There was a moment's silence, and if it were possible to conceive anybody so brisk as this young gentleman at a loss to open his business, one might have thought that Mr. Maitland was sparring for a beginning.

Miss MacNeal thought so, and generously came to the point. "To what," she said, pleasantly, "do I owe the honor of your visit?"

Mr. Maitland hemmed slightly. "Well, you see, Miss MacNeal, I am come on what you will probably think a strange business. We are a young firm just starting out, but we mean to succeed if brains and persistence—and, I may add, considerable backing—will get us there. We've got what we consider a splendid piece of property, and we—well, I may say I—have hit upon a great scheme that looks like a sure winner. If you will only lend us your name to help us with it!"

Miss MacNeal smiled encouragingly. "My name, I suppose," she said, "and my personality. Of course I know to this present generation I am nothing but a name. But I do not care to venture that unless I can show them that I am still worthy of it. And this, as you know, means first of all something to work on. Names in themselves are not worth much except for a night or two."

"By Jove, Miss MacNeal, with your

name and the proper booming we could sweep the decks! We could 'play to standing room only.' You give us the name and let us do the booming."

Now, no one could possibly be more proud of her name than Miss Willy MacNeal, but this constant harping upon it alone struck her as poor taste. It also gave her a paralyzing idea. "It—it is a small part, then, you want me for?" And her lip trembled. "You—you have cut it down?"

"Well," said he, "I don't know that you or any other great actress ever played just this part before. The idea—that is, in its entirety—is quite original. But we could offer you a wider publicity than any of them ever had. We are prepared to go into this thing for any amount of money."

"Sir!" said Miss MacNeal witheringly. "I can have no wider publicity than I have enjoyed. My name once echoed from sea to sea!" Under cover of this retort she pursued the idea which had paralyzed her. "That is it," she said now in a shaky voice. "To think of your cutting it down! Of your spoiling it so! A glorious part like that! Oh, is there no limit to the greed of these leading men? These stars who are afraid for others to shine lest they be put out! How much of it has this fine leading man of yours vouchsafed to leave in, sir? Enough for me to do *anything* with, or just enough to have people say, 'So that's your famous Willy MacNeal, is it? What a pity she didn't know enough to rest upon her reputation!' The reputation you're so anxious to trade upon!"

There was no doubt about Mr. Maitland's embarrassment now, or about his bewilderment. "I don't know what you mean, Miss MacNeal," he faltered. "What part are you talking about?"

She stared at him with a frightened look in her violet eyes, which seemed to have aged suddenly. "You didn't come about that? Well," said she, letting slip her old hope and adjusting herself to grasp at a new one, "what part did you come to offer me?"

The young man cleared his throat again. "I fear," he said hesitatingly,

"I have made an unfortunate beginning. I should have known that you would suppose—although I didn't guess that you were still acting—that I had come to see you on a matter of your profession. The fact is, my errand is quite different. Some time ago a scientific discovery fell into the hands of the man who is now my partner. He tested it and found it much better, he honestly believes, and so do I, than anything before the public. He came to me with a proposition, and I thought so well of it that I left the newspaper business and joined him. We have unlimited backing and are prepared for a long campaign. In the matter of—of things of this kind—everything depends upon a name and the unique way the boom is launched. Suddenly I thought of you—I had often heard my mother speak of your wonderful appearance. The more I thought of it the wider the thing opened up, and the more it seemed I had really hit upon a great idea—with a tremendous lot of good advertising in it for both of us."

Miss MacNeal was still looking at the young man with staring eyes, out of which the life was ebbing before his very gaze. She fingered her puffs mechanically, and his glance as mechanically followed every movement of her nervous, delicate fingers. "What is—this scientific discovery?" she asked slowly in a pinched voice.

"It's a—hair restorer," he said uncomfortably. "I wanted to call it the Willy MacNeal Hair Tonic—A Private Formula."

After a moment of silence Miss MacNeal rose feebly and steadied herself with a hand on the arm of the sofa. "A—hair restorer?" she repeated questioningly, as if she had not understood. "The Willy MacNeal Hair Tonic—A Private Formula!" On the last word there reappeared that curious lift in her voice. The young man brightened visibly, thinking she was going to laugh, but she only leaned heavily upon the arm of the sofa. At last she spoke. "Why, young man," she said brokenly, "young man!" Her legs were trembling under her and she

was forced to sit down. She turned away her face and for want of something to conceal her twitching fingers, she gently thumped up Miss Green's gorgeous pillow and squared it out. Then she said laboredly: "Young man, this is the only time I ever tried to act and couldn't. I have received a bitter blow. Do you mind if I ask you to go?"

The young man minded very much. He had been quite aghast at the reception of his proposition; he understood that he had deeply wounded and humiliated her, and he was genuinely distressed at having done so. He did not intend to go until he had set matters aright, but he rose to his feet. "I—I am awfully sorry," he said. "I suppose I seem brutal and all that, but you know I couldn't dream how you would take it. Many actresses—and all sorts of people—wouldn't feel this way about it."

Miss MacNeal had unconsciously taken the pillow into her lap and was smoothing it back and forth with both hands. A tear splashed on its orange cover. As she groped for her handkerchief she saw the pillow and remembered that it was Miss Green's cherished property. She wiped the spot anxiously and wondered if it would show when dry. As she did so, it all came over her—what the pillow had been borrowed for and her high expectation of yesterday. "Oh!" she cried. "It isn't only that. But I thought you had come for something else. Something I had been hoping for for weeks and almost counting on. That would give me the chance I have been waiting for for twenty-five years. And show them that I am not too old to act, and give me something to make life interesting, and let me die in harness—with my name once more on the bill. And now! To be asked instead to have it go on a *bottle!*"

There was silence for a minute, while Maitland looked at her with pain on his pleasant face and with an expression closely akin to wonder. She caught his look, and with that rapid transition she had the trick of, and which seemed so natural to her, she shook him up

suddenly. "Why do you look like that?" she asked, affronted.

"I was thinking—if you will pardon my saying so now—how perfectly great you'd be!" he answered. "Was the part a good part—and worthy of you?"

"I don't know that it's written yet," she said in a sober way that convulsed him with inward laughter. "How did you get my address?"

"When I got the idea," explained Maitland, "I hustled round to see if you were still—that is, if you were in New York. I found you were, and went to an agent for it. She said it was most unusual to give addresses, but I assured her it was not even remotely connected with the theatrical business and told her enough to make her give it to me."

Miss MacNeal threw up her hands. "You told her you were coming to see me with a proposition like this!" she cried in horror. "Relating to—to—trade!"

"Now, really, Miss MacNeal," returned the young man with some warmth, "I hope you don't think I'm such a fluff as that! I told her you were wanted with reference to a large and very valuable piece of property you might come in for." For the life of him he could not keep a twinkle out of his eyes.

Miss MacNeal found herself smiling neutrally at this piece of astuteness, and before she knew it she had twinkled back. "Well," she admitted, "I got *some* good out of it. That's all over the Rialto by this time. They'll all be at me to back plays now."

"Miss MacNeal!" flashed Maitland suddenly. "You give us your name and we'll back you in any play you want. Hire a manager and go ahead!"

She straightened herself and then leaning forward searched his face. Every fiber in her seemed electric, and her eyes gleamed like violet incandescent lamps. "You mean it?" she asked.

"Of course I mean it," he returned. But inwardly he reflected that the enthusiasm of the moment had carried him away. He wondered how Slingsby

would take it. His partner had been willing to pay a lump sum for the use of Miss MacNeal's name if necessary, but he knew he was hoping like himself, to get it for nothing, relying on the glibness of Mr. Maitland's tongue and the well known liking of all actresses, however aged, for judicious and attractive advertising. This was a large price he was paying for a name for an infant industry; indeed, to an industry yet unborn.

Revolving this aspect of the case, the young man's head began to simmer with another scheme, that opened up even more widely than the new business he had just embarked upon. If Slingsby did not care to be involved to the extent of his rash offer made on the spur of the moment to Miss MacNeal, he might get the backing elsewhere and plunge on his own account. Why should he himself not manage both her and the hair restorer? The two were not incompatible. By all of which it is to be seen that Mr. Maitland was a very young man indeed, but he was nobody's fool. He knew that in the meantime he must retrieve himself in some way; not exactly withdraw perhaps, for he felt himself committed to Miss MacNeal's cause, but prepare an exit. Both his partner's interest and his own pride and business sense demanded that he should make every effort to get her consent for nothing, or at least for a merely nominal sum. Decidedly, he had spoken too quickly. He could not let Slingsby in for backing a theatrical enterprise merely because of his own desire to atone for the pain he had cost her. But he was determined upon one thing. He would go the limit, he vowed to himself, sooner than quench the hope he had kindled in Miss MacNeal's childish violet eyes. All these thoughts seethed in his mind in a second, while he was conscious that that lady was probing him through and through. But beyond the perception that he had not capped his enthusiasm, he knew she had not guessed his hesitation and what was going on in his head, let him alone for that. "What was the part you wanted?" he said.

"It's in a book called 'The Unpaid Debt.'"

"What!" he cried eagerly. It was an exclamation and not a question, but Miss MacNeal thought it was the latter and repeated the title. The young man slapped his hands together. Inwardly he was congratulating himself on a marvelous piece of luck, a satisfactory solution and a way of escape at the same time. "Why, I know that book backwards!" he said aloud. "It's the aunt, of course! And he never thought of you! Why, there isn't anybody else in the world could do it."

"I know it," she assented, going up the scale in pride and coming down again mournfully in one of her irresistible circumflexes. "But there isn't any demand for me."

The young man stepped forward energetically. "Miss MacNeal," he said forensically, "I calculate there are one thousand hair restorers on the market and I intend to put on another one, and make it go big. The thing to do is to create a demand. If you'll create a demand for my hair restorer by lending me your name—oh, I know how to do the thing up brown, you can bet on that; you won't be sorry—I'll undertake to create a demand for you as the aunt in 'The Unpaid Debt,' and get you the part, too."

Miss MacNeal's breath was quite taken away by this brisk offer. This young man seemed to be offering a great deal, she thought, but still his tone had an assurance that carried conviction with it. "How?" she gasped.

"It's the easiest thing in the world when you're 'on.' In the first place, I know the author of the book. He has had several bids for his dramatization, and is going to take the manager who lets him dictate the caste. He was at his wit's end about the aunt. He never thought of you, of course—I beg your pardon, but he naturally supposed that you were—that is—that you weren't acting any more, you know. In the second place, I know a lot of newspaper men and how to work them. I was one myself last week, you know—a paragraph or two will set everything

going, and force you on the manager before he knows what's up. Though I should think any manager would jump at the chance of getting you, since the piece depends upon it. Gee, it's too easy! They'll be crazy for you, anyway." He paused a moment. "Say, I am awfully sorry I hurt your feelings. And I'll do what I can, and you needn't think you are under any obligations to me. You—you can let that go about making a dicker, but I tell you you can bank on the part."

Miss MacNeal was bewildered with her long ambition and the role of a lifetime thus thrust within her grasp, just when she imagined it snatched away from her forever. She put up her hand and mechanically fingered her puffs.

Mr. Maitland's eyes glistened greedily. "Say," he said, "I never saw such a head of hair before in all my life!" He was feeling curiously intimate with Miss MacNeal, as if he had known her for a long time. "You'll excuse my being crazy about it, since I'm in the business. Honest now—I beg your pardon—is it all yours?"

She laughed joyously—that is, she laughed with a subjective joyousness, but it was the sort of laugh the hearer laughs and cries with at the same time. "My stars!" the young man said with tears in his eyes. "That's Aunt Jocelyn's laugh. It's positively startling, the resemblance. I shouldn't wonder if he got the idea of the character from you in the first place. But say, honest, is it?"

For answer she deliberately undid every puff. It was a long process, but neither of them minded the time. As far as he was concerned, there could be no doubt that this, at least, still had the same old power to create a sensation, and that she had reasoned rightly when she said it would be even more of a novelty than the earlier one had been. As for her, there was an exultation in her heart she had not felt for twenty-five years as one by one the tresses unrolled, until finally she stood with all her hair falling in a silver torrent about her.

"My stars!" ejaculated Maitland

again. "If you don't advertise my hair restorer, there's the greatest waste of raw material ever happened. Say, it would be great! Don't you think you might make up your mind to it? I'd do it in a first-class style you couldn't find any fault with. And if the leading man should insist on cutting you down, and if the manager should turn out a donkey, you know, and all else failed, it would do the trick and get you the part."

Miss MacNeal had never heard any one think so rapidly in all her existence. She was desperately trying to keep up. "How would it?" she asked.

"Why, just about the time the play was ready for rehearsal, I'd paper every fence and every street car and subway and elevated in this city with 'The Willy MacNeal Hair Tonic—A Private Formula.' And he'd have to back up just to take advantage of all that free advertising."

She gave a gasp of admiration at the mind that could plan this master stroke. The long vista of New York bristling once more with her name, even on a hair restorer, overcame her; for, at the most, she couldn't expect any manager to star her. She knew she might be featured, and that was all. And even if she got the part, it might never have happened but for this young man. "Yet—yet—" parried Miss MacNeal, parting her hair with both hands in the deliciously familiar way and gazing through with entreaty in her violet eyes; she would so like to help this nice young man!—"I never did use your tonic, you know. Though, of course, I might have, if I'd had to."

"Of course you never used it," he retorted calmly. "It wasn't discovered then. Besides, it's only a name. Do you suppose if I called it the Queen of Sheba's Hair Tonic—A Private Formula, anyone would ever believe she used it? What you want is some name that will stick and is connected in everybody's mind with hair. Now your hair is a national institution. That is, it was—and it will be again if we manage it right."

"But I am not the Queen of Sheba,

and everybody would think I'd used it. It would be a lie," she protested pathetically.

Maitland was thinking hard of something else and had scarcely heard her. But he turned at this last word, thrust his hands into his pockets and looked at her in amazement.

"Miss MacNeal," he said, "the public is a child, and if you want to attract its attention you've got to lie to it. And it likes it! I don't need to tell that to an actress, do I?"

"No," she assented hastily. "And you are sure it's a good tonic?"

"It won't hurt anyone—which is more than you can say for most. And it will do some people a lot of good—which is as much as you can say of any. Honestly, I think it's the best on the market. But I was just wondering. Say, would you be willing to have a scene written in where you could take your hair down?"

"I might be," said Miss MacNeal demurely. But in her leaping heart she knew that this final prospect had banished her last scruple. Besides, gratitude and common decency and every other consideration demanded that she should do something in return for this delightful young man.

"Good!" he cried. "We'll set everyone talking about it again just the way my mother does now. 'Well,' he said as he looked at his watch, 'we want to get things started. Is it a go?'"

"Yes," she answered, and meekly committed herself into the hands of this masterful youthful Napoleon.

The front door had no sooner closed behind him than all the ladies surged at her threshold, while Nora bounded back up the stairs two steps at a time and hovered on the outskirts. Mrs. Oswald Trevelyan let them all in, quite forgetting that Mrs. Warren's shades were on Miss Smither's candlesticks. "Have you got it?" they were all chiding, when they all noticed at once that their hostess's hair was down, and started back in confusion. Certainly she could not have had time to take it down since the gentleman had departed. Was it possible that she could have done

so in his presence? But as the thought of the part was in everyone's mind, it was of the actress and not the woman they were thinking, and what would have been immoral in Mrs. Oswald Trevelyan was an engaging manifestation of genius in Miss Willy MacNeal. Everybody saw this written plainly in everybody else's eyes, and reassured they surged forward again. "Have you got it?" they chorused.

Mrs. Oswald Trevelyan smiled and spoke with the peculiar break in her voice, her violet eyes shimmering mist-

ily through the silver cascade. Indeed, I will not say that she did not shake forward her glorious mane for the sheer joy of practising on her second audience in twenty-five years, the old time picture. Was she to be censured? Remember that her first audience had awakened Miss Willy MacNeal from a Rip Van Winkle sleep. "Thank you so much, my dears! And for all your kindnesses!" she answered. "I have not exactly got it, but I think it's all right. I am negotiating for the part."



THE LADY OF DREAMS

By FRANCES E. DEEDS

SHE leads me away, away, away—this wonderful Lady of Dreams.

And I follow content wherever she goes,

While odor of lily and breath of the rose

And beam of the firefly around us streams.

A star is bound on her high, white brow,

And it gleams thro' the smoke of her dusky hair,

The scarlet poppies around her bow

And bend and blush

In the still night hush,

And nod and dream in the sleepy air.

She leads me away, away, away—and I follow the gleam of her gown,

Over the meadows wet with dew,

By dusky streamlets gliding thro'

Gray bridges of a shadow town.

Black dream hills rise and pathways steep,

And the rain drops down on the weighted grass,

The curling dream mists 'round us creep,

And twist and rise

To the gray bent skies,

And elf lights glimmer as we pass.

And the days that are gone away, away, and the faces of long ago

Come back through the mists and shadows gray,

Blessing and curse of the bygone day,

Glow or chill as the dream winds blow.

And the things that were are the things that are,

Shadow is life where the poppies glow,

The white beams of my Lady's star

Gleam soft on a world

In dew mists pearly,

Where my soul glides free to my loved Lenare.

VARIUM ET MUTABILE

By JESSIE MAUDE WYBRO

THERE were other girls more beautiful, other girls more witty, other girls with more *savoir faire* and the rest of the marketable French virtues. But Jasmine was Jasmine, and the fact of the matter was that hardly a man came within eyeshot who did not discover sooner or later that this was the one flower in the world for him.

It was a bit puzzling. Jasmine herself wondered at it now and then. It did not make her particularly happy; on the contrary, it was often embarrassing. And she was no nearer married now than she was when the little boys used to fight for the privilege of carrying her primer and slate. Nay, she was further from it, because then she was always making up her small mind which one she would marry when she grew up; and now she often wondered where the Right One was—sometimes, even if there really was a Right One.

Her girl friends married, some happily, some miserably, some tolerably neither; but one and all they looked at Jasmine in triumph and said, though not in words, to be sure: "Humph! You couldn't do as much!"

Jasmine smiled to herself and answered not a word—a thing most unique and one I would not have the courage to assert if I did not know it to be true.

So the years went by, and the mythically possible Right One faded further and further into intangible distance. What if he never came? Jasmine gave a gasp. Perhaps he had come and she had not recognized him!

With much painstaking care she reviewed the array of masculinity, each of

whom had tried to persuade her that he was the real and inimitable R. O.—none genuine without his signature! She wouldn't go back further than the time when she did her hair up. Previous to that they could be discounted as mere childish fancies.

First, there was Norman Delaney. He was so nice, so gentle, so polished in manner, so superlatively everything desirable in a husband. Why hadn't she fallen in love with him? She puckered her brows in vain. She couldn't recall for the life of her.

Then there was Mr. Hillis Endelbury, Ph.D., with an ascetic blue eye and a Boston accent. What a distinguished air he had! He had devoted his life to the study of the Accusative Absolute as Used in Attic Prose, and the results had been most gratifying. Jasmine caught fire from his enthusiasm, and wished to make the acquaintance of the Accusative. She intimated as much to the young Greek scholar. "The Accusative Absolute"—he always spoke of it in capital letters—"is only found in the participles of impersonal verbs in the neuter singular." Jasmine tried to digest the statement, but it gave her the nightmare, and she lay awake the rest of the night fancying the horror of a life with Accusatives Absolute strewn all over the house or starting up out of every doorway. No, Mr. Hillis Endelbury, Ph.D., no. But it was really too bad; he had the most beautiful head. Jasmine wondered whether it was the constant pounding of it against so hard a thing as the Accusative that gave it that magnificent contour.

Mr. Lawrence Ferroke rose next for

inspection. He *was* a good fellow, in spite of the fact that his eyes had grown nearsighted from looking so sharply to the main chance. His best enemy—if such could be found, which is doubtful, for the Lawrence Ferrokcs take care to have precious few of him—would have to own that he was just to all men, snobbish to a few, and a favorite cotillion leader. No, he was certainly not the One. Did the eyebrows come from the nearsight? Did the nearsight come from the sharp outlook? Or did the nearsight come from the eyebrows, and the outlook from the nearsight? Which was cause and which effect? she pondered. Not that she used those words—women think in instincts and would often be horrified to hear the worded interpretation. And while she was wondering it occurred to her that Lawrence Ferroke hadn't a vice to his name. Did she like him better or worse for that? This was problem number two, and she found herself dangerously near mathematics. No, she could never, *never*, undergo the mental strain of marrying a problem.

Then there was the staid, taciturn Mr. Cutbright, known to be a misogynist. His quiet eyes used to follow her about wistfully; once or twice she had caught a fiery gleam in them as they rested upon her when he thought himself unobserved. His unasking devotion touched her pity; but the thought of sitting opposite him at table three hundred and sixty-five days a year, and sometimes three hundred and sixty-six, made the chills run down her back. So she tied up the "No" in a bouquet of nice, complimentary things—and looked the other way when she handed it to him. But she might just as well have looked at him, for she felt the pain in the quiet, dark face just the same.

And Mr. Sylvester Sanderson—oh, what eyes he had! And what a disheartening process to discover that the gray matter which should have occupied the space behind them had through some mistake been left out! One would say that those beautiful brown orbs were looking acres of unfathom-

able things, and that when those handsome lips opened they would drop jewels of grace and wit. But oh, me, oh, me! The eyes sparkled because there was an abundance of vitreous humor, and those handsome lips were so satisfied with their own curves that it never occurred to them to utter a syllable that was worth while. Alas! And Jasmine sighed deeply.

These were the variables that had approached R. O. as their limit; but, as we remember from our Euclid, variables never reach their limits. There were others that did not even take rank with these, but remained unclassified in the outer darkness of utter impossibility.

Having reduced the number of possibilities to five, she proceeded by the process of elimination and arrived at last at one—as everyone knows you will if you eliminate long enough. Against Hillis Endelbury there was the Accusative Absolute; against Lawrence Ferroke, his eyebrows; against Mr. Cutbright, his poor, lean, twisted nature; against Sylvester Sanderson, his cranial vacuum. But against Norman Delaney there was nothing. Therefore Norman Delaney must be It. It was a clear case of

Eeney, meeney, miney mo,
Catch a nigger by the toe;
If he hollers, let him go,
Eeney, meeney, miney, mo,

and the "mo" had fallen upon Norman Delaney!

So, pursuant thereto, she set up his image in her heart and worshiped it. She dived among discarded gowns and millinery and fished out the costume and the hat he had once admired. Every now and then she would get them out, don them, recall how he had looked and what he had said and succeed in feeling vastly sentimental.

If she had been psychologically inclined she would have known that when a woman's heart is denied substance it will feed upon shadow; but she wasn't, heaven be thanked! Fancy the woes of a poor scribe compelled to write the memoirs of a lady psychologically in-

clined! So she hugged the shadow in delighted delusion; and her eyes took on a dreamy look and her mouth a little wistful droop, and the men hovered thicker than ever.

Among whom was John Lothrop. Now when John Lothrop saw the aforementioned look and droop, his lips set in a straight line. The men who were his enemies always had cause for rue when that line appeared.

Jasmine repulsed him gently, as she had all the others. But he only smiled and came as regularly as before.

Presently she found that no matter what she did or what she said—sufficient to have made Lawrence Ferroke red with rage or Hillis Endelbury go and marry someone else—John Lothrop took it with an easy smile.

"What does he mean?" she thought to herself uneasily. And she went straight and got out that old hat and gown and sat down in the twilight and sang softly "Oh, Promise Me," which Norman Delaney had vowed he would always love, yea, though it grew so threadbare that nothing be left of it but the warp.

By these means she fortified herself, and when John Lothrop came again she brought out a whole galaxy of coldnesses and shynesses and subterfuges. But when he said good night he held her hand beyond the legal limit, the while a little twitching smile hovered about his lips.

"Well," ejaculated Jasmine to herself indignantly as she went upstairs to bed, "of all the men—"

About mid-season Jasmine began to entertain doubts of herself. Hitherto when she was cool the man sighed; when she was cold he groaned. But behold now a man who smiled imperceptibly through frost and snow and hail and ice! What was one to make of it?

Then one day she learned, to her great glee, that he hated the country.

The next time he came she told him how she adored the country; how nothing so satisfied her as undisturbed communion with nature; how she had always proposed to marry a man with a

similar taste some day, and how they would settle down far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife and bury themselves in rusticity and bliss.

She waxed quite eloquent over the subject, and scaled heights of rhetoric that fairly turned her dizzy.

She was always enchanting when she was excited, and when you added the glow of secret triumph she became quite maddening. So maddening, in fact, that John Lothrop had to restrain himself by holding strenuously to the arms of his chair.

But alas for her that diggeth a pit, for verily her own feet shall fall into it! When Lothrop came again he was full of a wicked, subdued glee.

"You remember Brodwin's little place up Tarrytown way?"

Yes, she remembered it.

"Rather neat little place."

Yes, neat and little.

"An ideal place for undisturbed communion with nature."

"Ah!"

"And sufficiently far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife."

"Perhaps."

"A place where two people might most deliciously bury themselves in rusticity and bliss."

At that she donned her armor.

"It would depend entirely on the two people, Mr. Lothrop."

"Exactly. Now two people who love the country—"

"But *you* don't!" And then she could have bitten her tongue in two. She had owned the standpoint!

Malicious, silent triumph shook Lothrop's sides and gleamed on his square face.

"Tastes are susceptible of cultivation, I have heard and believe," he reflected musingly, "especially in the company of certain persons."

"Yes, possibly; but it must be persons who are—who are very fond of each other."

"Precisely. I know two just such."

"Indeed, Mr. Lothrop! You are very fortunate in your acquaintance."

"I believe I am," he returned, smiling calmly.

After a moment's pause he broke the silence brusquely:

"How would you like—I mean, are you fond of hedges?"

"Around one's speech?"

"Around one's country place."

"The place itself would have to be taken into consideration, I should judge."

"When will you go out to see it?"

"To see what?"

"The country place."

"Whose?"

"Ours."

"Ours! Mr. Lothrop, I don't understand you!"

She had risen and stood before him, pale but defiant.

He rose, too, and came close to her, calm and masterful. He looked her steadily in the eyes. She began to tremble. Then he reached out and took one little lily petal of a hand. It struggled, tried to wrench itself free, then fluttered and lay still. In like manner he possessed himself of the other.

"John Lothrop," she breathed vehemently, "I didn't think you were such a bully!"

Her breast rose and fell; her eyes flashed. John Lothrop restrained himself with difficulty; then in a moment could no longer. He dropped her hands and caught her to his heart.

The sudden change in the plan of attack had found her defenses down.

She was his prisoner, fast bound. Her small strength could avail nothing against his. So she lay quietly in his arms.

"Now do you understand?" he murmured, his lips in her soft hair.

She did not answer. She was trying to still the awful thumping of her heart and to gather all the thunderbolts she could lay her hands upon to hurl at the atrocious audacity of this man.

But how strong his arms were! And how strangely comfortable her head lay in the hollow of his shoulder!

A sense of wonder took possession of her. She shuddered, as if letting go of something, yet dared not reach out for the other thing that obtruded itself.

He touched her forehead reverently with his lips. A current of ice and fire flowed through her veins at the touch.

At length she opened her eyes and raised them to his. What far depths of tenderness she saw!

She lifted her head from his shoulder and looked at him. Could it be—

His arms fell away from her, and she stood free, facing him.

"Why, John!" The cry was full of wondering gladness. "John! I believe you're the One—the Right One!"

Of her own accord she came and laid her head upon his breast.

"I could have told you that long ago, sweetheart," he murmured upon her lips, as he held her once more in his arms.



PROVERBS OF A NEIGHBORHOOD

By ALICE VAN LEER CARRICK

ONE touch of envy makes a whole street kin.

It takes all kinds of people to make a suburb.

Knowledge comes, but culture lingers.

Affluence isn't having more than your needs; it's having more than your neighbors.

October, 1900—5

LOVE'S GARDEN

By PAULINA BRANDRETH

THERE comes a dream of a garden's old time bliss,
Of a rose's breath and a dream god's magic kiss.
Let us forget, remembering only this.

There breathed a sigh and fluttered a slim, cool hand;
There gleamed a setting sun o'er a paling strand,
An aftermath in a dim and quiet land.

There flowed a stream whose low, sweet murmur fell
Through vales where grew the sad-eyed immortelle,
And blossoms frail and mingled asphodel.

A moon rose 'neath the purple hood of night;
The vines, dew-stained, hung limp in sallow light;
Once from the wood a sleepy thrush took flight.

Then the dream ebbed faint and far from the lover's heart,
And the eyes of One met his with a vague, chill start;
Near by a flower lay broken and torn apart.

The moon went out, yet close to the lover's breast,
Like a wraith of mist that floats in the sunlit west,
Lay the Soul of the Dream, quiescent in peaceful rest.

But his sight grew dim, and the darkness stiffly lay
On the lips he sought with passion and dismay;
The Winds of Change blew cold from the dawning day.

There comes a dream of a garden's old time bliss,
Of a rose's breath and a dream god's magic kiss;
Let us forget, remembering only this.

SIMEON CRAIG'S LAST WORDS

By FREDERIC TABER COOPER

ALWAYS afterwards the details of that hour lived hideously clear in Evelyn Thurber's memory—the long, straight, level road, stretching grayly into the November dusk; the reckless lurching of the speeding car under the guidance of insensate rage; the bad old face thrust vindictively near her own, the sallow cheeks mottled with congested veins, the thin lips writhing in a wolfish snarl. Always afterwards she was to hear, above the haunting drone of the machine, that cracked and raucous voice, shrilling forth impotent curses:

"Damn you, no! You've cost too much already! Thieves, you women, every one of you!"

Then, without warning, had come the change. A nameless fear dawned in the bloodshot eyes; a sudden spasm wrenched the fierce old visage into a mask of pain; the stiffening fingers shot downward, fumbling desperately, then clutched inertly at the lean old throat; the left foot slid lumpishly from the pedal it had pressed.

"I think I am dying," uttered Simeon Craig in a voice between a whisper and a groan. The head fell limply forward; the spare, gaunt figure drooped, shriveled, sank to a formless heap, relentlessly swept onward through the gathering night.

Physically sick with fear and loathing, the woman relaxed her first fierce grip upon his arm and cowered back to the limits of her corner, staring with dilated eyes at the silent huddle of furs beside her. The sordid quarrel, the ghastly seizure, the headlong rush of the car she was impotent to check, had crumpled up her courage and left her

spent, nerveless, dumbly waiting for the end. Each tree and post and jutting stone that loomed up dimly through the gloom ahead, then passed innocuous in a blur of gray, racked her with the ache of foreseen punishment. With the dizzy rush of a moving picture her brain rehearsed each nightmare detail: the shock of impact, the grinding wreckage, the dead weight of iron, pinning down twisted limbs, stifling moans, crushing out life itself. Or again she saw herself keenly, cruelly alive, held down by one bruised foot or broken arm, faintly calling for help through the slow hours of the night. In sudden, unreasoning panic she almost flung herself from the car. But on the left that rushing smear of shadow was full of mysterious menace. A multitudinous snapping of dead twigs told that they were running perilously near the roadside; while on the right hand, where the road was clear, Simeon Craig dumbly barred her passage.

Impulsively, Mrs. Thurber's fingers groped their way to the steering wheel and clung there, bunglingly straining to hold the great car to its course. Wide-eyed, she probed the darkness, feeling rather than seeing the stealthy veering to the left; in another moment they would go crashing into a ditch, a wall, a bank of earth. She gave a timorous twist of the wheel toward the right. It turned readily enough for perhaps half an inch, then offered an unexpected resistance. Then, as it yielded to a more resolute tug, she realized that the disadvantage of her position, stretching at arm's length across that silent huddle of furs, was ample reason for its first stubbornness.

This time the car responded with a startling swerve, a sudden diagonal dash, followed by an ominous ripping as it crushed through a mass of underbrush. Desperately she spun the wheel the other way, her fright finding outlet in a nervous scream. By the barest margin she had remedied her blunder and kept upon the road.

Her futile outcry merged and lost itself in the singing rush of frosty air, the soft swirl of wheels over a sodden carpet of leaves. Yet, almost at the moment that her own voice met her ear with startling strangeness, Mrs. Thurber became aware that another sound, a monotonous, insistent, familiar sound was missing. At first she could not identify it; she simply felt a curious, indefinable silence. Then in a flash came enlightenment; the droning rhythm of the motor had ceased. Mechanically the scene reconstructed itself in the background of her brain. She saw again the fumbling fingers strain desperately downward, saw the limp foot slip heavily from the pedal. By chance or by design, in the first moment of his seizure Simeon Craig had succeeded in disconnecting the power.

The car was still moving by acquired momentum, yet at a perceptibly lessened speed. Under clear daylight she must inevitably have noticed the difference at once. But here in this blurred stretch of quivering shadows her sense of motion was curiously at fault. Her first panic had passed—she felt only a feverish impatience for the mad impetus to spend itself. A hundred yards more of level road and she could safely risk a jump. And then, without warning, the road swerved sharply to the right; it was upon her almost before she was aware. Warned by her earlier lesson, she swung the wheel with better judgment and took the turn without mishap. In the first relief of having caught the trick, she failed to realize that the road had not only curved, but had taken a sudden downward slant that sent the heavy car forward with redoubled speed. A moment before she had been

weighing the chances of a leap into the dark. Now, with both tense hands cramping on the helm as though her salvation in this world and the next lay in maintaining her hold, she strained each overwrought sense to follow a path that ran no longer straight but with sudden capricious twists and unexpected drops that made the wheels skid sickeningly on the wet roadbed, and sent the car bounding forward at a devil-driven pace. For a few breathless seconds she had no time to think coherently. Jolting over stones, sloughing through mud holes, mowing down shrubs and wayside undergrowth, she still swept onward and downward, conscious only of a dumb wondering whether the hill would ever come to an end.

A gleam as of scattered stars burst suddenly upon her as the car, following the eastern trend of the hillside, shot out from underneath the deepened twilight of the trees. Across the widening valley a trail of arc lights outlined the course of an avenue and a trolley line winding snake-like down one slope and up the other. Overhead the wintry gray had already deepened to an unfathomable blue. Plainly the time was later than she had thought. Toward the south a shimmering aureole, flung heavenward from countless myriads of lights, proclaimed that the city's play hour had begun. In one flashing burst she saw it all, the theaters, the restaurants, the thoughtless gaiety, the surging crowd. And at the same time she saw the goal toward which she was plunging, the juncture with the avenue not a quarter of a mile ahead, the triple curve to right, to left, to right again, the uninterrupted descent to the railway crossing at the bottom. Her transient hope that the car would stop of its own accord now mocked her with its absurd futility.

Meanwhile for some hundreds of yards her present course ran straight. Fool that she was! She might at least try to stop the car; she might at least experiment with the various levers and pedals that she could feel rather than see, and of whose several uses she had

not the vaguest idea. She knew, of course, that there was such a thing as an emergency brake. More than once she had seen the car brought to a quivering standstill with one mighty jerk, avoiding manslaughter by a bare margin of inches; but always at such times she had been staring ahead, wide-eyed, in a fascinated horror that, none the less, had a certain pleasurable thrill. By some miracle they had always stopped in time. But how it was done she had never thought to ask. Her first experiment resulted in the up-raised voice of the Gabriel horn that sent its harmonious wail across the valley like a foreboding trump of doom. Stifling a moan of sheer hysteria, she tried again. The strident grind of gritting cogs protested like a soul in pain. Then for a time she went quite mad, pushing, pulling, twisting anything and everything she could reach, unconscious of bruised fingers and broken nails, obsessed by just one thought, the finding of that emergency brake. And then, almost before it had begun, her brief respite was over. She had barely time to seize the wheel once more, when the last, long downward plunge began.

Suddenly, her groping foot found and pressed another pedal, slipped, recovered, pressed again. At once she was conscious that it gripped the wheels, that it almost held them, that this time she was doing the right thing—but doing it too late. A little sooner, back on the level stretch, she might so easily have gained control. But here on the hill, handicapped by the awkward strain of her position, she scarcely counted against the force of acquired momentum, the mighty downward drag of gravity. On each loop she could feel the plunging car rise on its outer tires, balance precariously, then right itself again to dash more madly downward. And yet with aching knee she jammed her foot the harder, taught by blind instinct that even the slight hold she could effect was all that kept the car upright each time it took a curve.

With the rush of wind cutting her

face like knives and whipping to tatters the fragments of the veil that she had long since torn ruthlessly aside, she stared ahead half hypnotized by the glare of an arc light that pitilessly showed her the goal. That last sharp turn onto the bridge above the railway, where the road narrowed to the bare width of the trolley track, no runaway thing on wheels could live to take. The only question was whether the crash would come against the iron balustrade of the bridge or the frail wooden fence guarding the approach—whether the end would be a sheer drop into the railway cut onto the stone ballast of the tracks, or a ghastly somersault down the soft earth of the embankment. There was nothing more to do; she had pushed and pulled and twisted everything, each valve and pedal and foolish little plug—No! Not quite everything! With eleventh hour clairvoyance she remembered that there were two long handles on the right hand side of the car—not merely the one already jammed forward to the furthest notch, but another now hidden by Simeon's silent form. Automatically she flung herself upon the floor of the car, her knees on the feet of Simeon Craig, her silken skirts enwrapping his gaunt legs, her body bruised against his bony frame. Unconscious of the purport of her act, unconscious of the effort she put forth, she clutched the lever, and, bracing herself against the old man's knees, jerked the handle forward to the limit. There seemed to follow a whirlwind of discordant sounds, the scream of rasping steel, the sharp splintering of wood, the jarring violence of an instant halt. Then her head came dully against the iron of the dashboard and for a moment the world receded from her.

II

FROM out an infinite remoteness she felt herself slowly laboring back to actuality. With earth and sky still reeling giddily, she struggled to her knees and looked around; then cringed back

from the blackness that yawned below. It took a moment with close shut eyes to realize what had happened—that the car had crashed through the fence, ripping and crumpling wood like so much cardboard and missing by less than a foot the stone parapet of the bridge. The emergency brake had locked the wheels on the very verge of the embankment. Even now the car rested at an angle, with bonnet projecting over the brink like a diver poised for a plunge.

With knees so trembling that she could hardly rise Mrs. Thurber struggled to her feet in new panic. She had no certainty that the car was really held; it might be just balancing there, caught momentarily by some stick or stone. She even fancied that she could feel it moving, that it was starting again on a new mad dash; she could already feel herself falling endlessly through space. She must get out; she must feel solid ground beneath her feet or she would go mad. She clambered painfully across to the back seat, thence over the rear of the tonneau and dropped inertly to the ground.

There in the mud and litter of the roadside she crouched, half dazed, mechanically picking and brushing dead leaves and twigs from her silken skirts and fox skin wraps—skirts and wraps that Simeon Craig had paid for—and vainly telling herself that she was quite safe now, the danger was over; she was still alive, not even badly hurt. She had only to wait until a trolley car came—she had no idea just where it would land her, no idea just where she was even now; but it surely would not take long to reach home. She might even be in time to meet Jim serenely, as though nothing had happened. Jim was apt to be detained late as the holiday season approached. He was usually the last of the clerks to leave his desk. That was Jim's characteristic way, to plod and slave and do two men's work for half of one man's pay. Jim would notice nothing wrong with her; he was not of the observant sort. That was why she had never felt any scruples on his behalf. Why

should a woman feel scruples when a man was so stupidly credulous that he never doubted her word, never questioned the source of furs and silks and jewels—so easily deceived that he really thought his pittance as an underpaid bookkeeper sufficed for the indulgence of her spendthrift instincts?

Would the trolley never come? Almost as she framed the question she noted that the hind wheels of the big touring car barely cleared the track; that the first trolley which passed that way must inevitably come to a halt in order to avoid collision. Heavens, she must not be found here! She, the wife of another man, in company with the notorious Simeon Craig! She could hear already the excited outcry, the brutal questioning, the swift suspicion of her presence. She foresaw the gloating headlines in sensational "extras," the tireless tracking of her covered trail, the shock of knowledge to family and to friends. How came she to be with Simeon Craig? That was the question she must face in all its countless degrees of suggestiveness. Throughout her life Mrs. Thurber had longed for soft, luxurious, unattainable things; had fought for them, sinned for them. Throughout her life she had cringed and shrunk from physical suffering and danger. But tonight this juggernaut ride into the unknown with that inert heap beside her for companion had taught her a fear more poignant than even the nearness of death—the fear of shame, ruthlessly stripped bare. She swept one glance of desperate uncertainty around her. She must get away unseen, and at once. The trolley might come at any moment. Already she fancied that she could see its light flashing through the trees high up on the western slope. The railway station gleamed in plain sight not a quarter of a mile down the cut. Then suddenly came the recollection that she had no money. She purposely never had money when she went out with Simeon Craig.

There was only one thing for her to do; yet she held herself in horror even while she did it. Clambering over

splintered rails, she dragged herself painfully up on the right hand side of the tonneau, and with shaking fingers began to feel inside of that heap of furs, to push and pull with growing boldness, searching for that long, shiny, timeworn pocketbook, from which its owner had so often grudgingly supplied her needs. As her hand slipped at last into his breast pocket, she had a ghastly fancy that the old man resisted, that the limp form twitched, that the ruling passion made a last vain effort to protect his wealth. Some instinct of self-preservation prompted her to thrust back the pocketbook after taking not quite all its contents, to stuff the money into her muff, not stopping to count it, but realizing only that there were many bills, some of them large ones—and with all that money on him he had still grudged the paltry sum she asked!

A distant shrilling of steel brakes, a blue flame flashing through the trees, warned her that the southbound trolley was winding its way downward to the valley. She still had time to escape, to disappear into the shadow. And yet, stupidly, irresolutely, she stood there, wasting precious moments, staring at that silent thing in the car, living over in a sudden burst of enlightenment the hideous folly of the past few months. Oh, how she hated him, now that it was too late to let him know it! How she scorned his stinginess, his smoldering resentment of her hold upon him! From the beginning it was he who had made her pay. Even now it was she who must meet the cost, she who must face exposure if once her name should become coupled with his. She would pass into history as "the Thurber Woman," the latest episode in Simeon Craig's long and unsavory record! She found it in her heart to wish that the car had not stopped there on the brink; that it had hurled them both over together. Then, at least, he would be where he belonged, rolled in the mire under his own tonneau.

Well, why not? The idea fastened itself upon her, possessed her with the

tenacity of an incubus. Why should she not send him over, even now? She had only to release the brake. The car was balanced so precariously that a touch should be enough to send it over. The whole thing was hideously simple. She would do away with the evidence, cover her traces, gain precious hours. It would seem so obviously a commonplace accident. There would be no awkward questions about the cause of his death, or the presence of someone else in the car—someone who had meddled with the brakes. And all the while the trolley car was coming steadily nearer; she could hear the scream of the wheel flanges as they ground around the curves. Deliberately she dragged the lever back into place. Then, as the car refused to move, she pushed and strained and beat upon it with her clenched fist. Something held it. Ah, now she saw! The rear tires were caught by one of the splintered fence rails, whose opposite end, projecting ten feet laterally, gave her a powerful tool to pry with. Heedless of ruined gloves and bleeding hands, she wrenched and dragged and sawed at the rail until it slid from under first one wheel and then the other. Even then, for a moment, she dared not believe that the car had started. Then, as it slowly dipped and disappeared, she turned and ran with both hands over her ears to shut out the dull impact on the earth below.

III

JIM THURBER, hastily bolting his seven o'clock breakfast, with one eye on the morning paper and the other on the three soft boiled eggs that he was stirring to a homogeneous paste, was even less observant than usual of the white-faced, hollow-eyed young woman whose fingers shook visibly as she poured out his second cup of coffee. The paper had the story. She had caught one glimpse of heavy headlines on the front page, and of a grim caricature of the sinister old face, as an added embellishment of the first column.

Jim had not seen it; he was absorbed as usual with the football news. A flush of excitement had spread up into the roots of his thin, sandy hair, making him look, so Evelyn told herself, a little more inefficient, a little less of a man than usual. The necessity to see that paper, to know what had happened, what people were saying, to convince herself that she was safe, quite safe, made the suspense unbearable.

"Jim, you had better hurry," she suggested; "I think the clock is about ten minutes slow." With maddening deliberation the man drew a fat silver watch from his pocket.

"You're wrong, Evvy," he told her. "It's fast. I've a quarter of an hour yet. Gee, but that was a hot game the Princeton boys put up yesterday! I'd have given a week's salary to have seen that touchdown in the last three minutes of the second half! Jove, Evvy, I might have gone if you hadn't needed a new hat!" He smiled across at her with a good-natured tolerance that goaded her to recklessness.

"For heaven's sake, talk about something interesting," she flared at him. "Is there nothing but touchdowns in the paper today?"

Methodically the man smoothed out the paper and folded it over, glancing at his wife with mild surprise.

"Hullo, yes!" he exclaimed suddenly. "Another auto smash! Old Sim-eon Craig gone to his account at last! Spicy reading, this looks like. Now we may get some real facts about the old scoundrel. Perhaps you'll find that I was right when I said he wasn't the sort you could afford to be seen with—that time you had a chance to meet him through those swell friends of yours. Listen to this! Couldn't even die without a scandal!"

With clenching hands and set teeth Mrs. Thurber nerved herself to listen to the details that she could still see in a whirling horror of memory. Mechanically her own thoughts raced ahead. She ceased to hear her husband's droning voice; she ceased to see the flush of interest spreading higher and higher

through the roots of his sandy hair. Instead, she saw again the long, straight, level road, stretching endlessly into the November dusk; the sinister old face, thrust vindictively so near her own; the sudden, desperate fumbling of stiffening fingers—and then the hideous change, the endless onward rush through gathering darkness.

Suddenly a phrase, a group of six simple, ordinary words, crashed their way through the absorption of her thoughts and hammered on her brain in a deafening verberation of horror: "He was found at a late hour last night," so Jim's voice was droning on, "pinned down beneath the body of the car, but still alive and suffering horrible agony—"

Still—alive—and—suffering—horrible—agony! What a hideous, impossible absurdity! She had seen him die! She had seen that dreadful look dawn in his eyes, had seen that haunting clutching at his throat for breath. Alive? It was a cruel, malicious newspaper lie! He couldn't, mustn't be alive! If he was alive when they found him, he must have been alive all the time, during the endless torture of that downhill plunge! He must have been alive when she had knelt across him and stopped the car! Then, what in heaven's name had she done when she released that brake?

"That isn't so, Jim! It doesn't say that; it can't say it! He wasn't alive!" The words were out before she knew that she was speaking. Her husband glanced at her again over the edge of the paper, with mild astonishment in his weak blue eyes.

"Why, yes, Evvy, that is just what it does say. He seems to have had some sort of a fit and lost control of the machine; and then the shock of the fall or the pain or something brought him to again. Listen:

"He was hurried to the hospital, where it was found that he could not survive the night. And as there were suspicious circumstances, the coroner was notified. Examination of the car shows that the mechanism had been tampered with. Robbery may have been the motive, for Mr. Craig is

known to have cashed a large cheque at his bank yesterday noon, yet only a few bills were found protruding in disorder from his pocketbook, while one or two had fallen in the mud of the road. Fragments of a woman's veil and certain footprints at the scene of the accident are evidence that the aged millionaire was not alone in the car. When rescued he was delirious with pain, and nothing could be made from his disjointed phrases beyond vague threats and curses, apparently directed against some woman. It is rumored that before his death, which occurred two hours later, Mr. Craig rallied sufficiently to give information that will enable the police to solve the mystery of the woman's identity."

Jim Thurber reluctantly laid down the paper, preparatory to his usual scramble into his overcoat. "There's a warning for you, Evvy," he said with heavy jocoseness. "The old sinner couldn't even die without wrecking a reputation with his last words." But, as he turned to go, there was something in her colorless face that pierced even his obtuseness. "Why, Evvy," he said, "how impressionable you are! You're as white as the tablecloth!"

The woman had risen blindly, her outstretched hands groping for support. She took two wavering steps, then paused and stood, swaying slightly, mutely fighting off the panic fear of

being left alone, the mad desire to cry the truth aloud.

"Oh, it's nothing," she managed to say. "I'm a bit dizzy, that's all. I sprang up too suddenly. Don't wait. I'm all right now—really I am!" She wrenched her face into the mockery of a smile, repeating her assurance. Would he never go? "Now hurry or you surely will be late." She watched him start, the worried look already clearing from his brow, his thoughts once more intent on goals and touch-downs. She waved her hand almost gaily as he passed out.

Then the mask dropped. She slid in utter limpness into the nearest chair and leaned back with tight shut eyes, half swooning, while the horror of herself grew upon her, clutched her, held her by the throat. She was too cowardly to do the big thing; she lacked the bravery to confess, the bravery even to kill herself. She could only wait, with both hands over her ears to shut out the ghastly echo of a dull thud on soft earth. She could only stare stony-eyed into the future, flinching at each ring of the doorbell, cowering in wordless dread of those who might come to tell her what had been Simeon Craig's last words.



IN HARLEM

BENSONHURST—Does your wife find fault with the size of the flat?
YORKVILLE—There isn't room for complaint.



WHOSO mocketh a married man, let him take heed, for a fool is born every minute and the mocker himself falleth by the wayside.

TOODLES AND THE OTHERS

By JULIAN THONE

BALTIMORE, October 12, 1908.

DEAR JOHN:

There is just a moment between times and so I am using it to write to you, for I know you must be a bit anxious. Mamma is feeling much better today and is sitting up again. You don't know how good it is to see her once more something like her old self. It was an attack of pleurisy, though at first it looked a lot like pneumonia. I will confess, now that it is most over, that I was very much frightened for a time, and once I was on the verge of telegraphing you. I am glad now that I didn't.

Mamma was delighted with the flowers that you sent, though she couldn't help murmuring, "They must have cost the poor boy a lot." They arrived in perfect condition and are still quite fresh about the room.

Your last letter before mother fell ill was somewhat gloomy and pessimistic. Don't lose heart, dear brother. It will all come in time; it is bound to. And don't worry. Above all, don't worry about mamma and me. We can get along nicely, and there is a great deal of comfort in just believing in you. I just know one of your plays will make a hit soon.

Some time ago mamma made you some handkerchiefs and we will send them shortly.

That's all for this time, except love from mamma and

Sis.

II

NEW YORK, October 13, 1908.

JOHN COURTNEY, ESQ.,
NEW YORK CITY.

DEAR SIR:

We are inclosing regular monthly bill. We beg to call your attention to

the fact that the clothing was delivered to you some three months ago and that this is the third bill rendered you. We do not wish to press you, but would beg of you to consider that we also have obligations to meet. We therefore earnestly request you to give this matter your earliest attention.

Very truly yours,

ACKARD & GODDARD.

Dic. G. R. G.

III

NEW YORK, seven in the morning—in bed.

DEAR TOODLES:

What's up? And how's how? We didn't meet you last night nor the night before, though heaven and an empty stomach know that we were at the appointed place at the appointed hour. It was beastly of you and brutish. Bess is saying worse than that. What's up, eh? Work? Oh, come, Toodles, that's an old song. It has been through the war and seen honorable service. The tune's played out and the notes toothless with age. Is that good enough to go into one of your comedies? You are welcome to it.

What I want to say is—well, we will be at the old stand tonight. If you do not come—yes, we will blush a bit—What! Yes, even beneath our rouge, you old cynic. And I don't use the beastly stuff, either. Heigho, it's a weary world, Toodles. Come and laugh at it with

Thine Own

K.

IV

NEW YORK, October 14, 1908.

MR. JOHN COURTNEY,
NEW YORK CITY.

MY DEAR MR. COURTNEY:

I should be very glad if you could

stop in at my office tomorrow at about eleven to talk over your comedy.

Very truly yours,
KENNARDE & Co.,
Play Brokers,
per Charles J. Kennarde.

V

BALTIMORE, October 12, 1908.

It seems weeks and weeks, dear heart, since I last heard from you, though my calendar tells me it has been but six days. I am not scolding, for I know how hard you are working, and I trust you always—more than I trust even myself.

Mrs. Kirkland has invited me to visit her in New York and I have accepted, more, if I should tell the truth, that I may be near you than that I have any desire to see Mrs. Kirkland. I arrive Thursday of next week, October 21st. Can't you come up Friday afternoon? Please, dear. I haven't seen you for ages, and I have so many things to talk over with you and—I want to feel your arms about me. Shame—but I do!

Your
GRACE.

VI

NEW YORK, October 15, 1908.

JACK:

Tomorrow night sure at eight-thirty. Claire and Bess will be there.

G.

VII

NEW YORK, October 15, 1908.

JOHN COURTNEY, ESQ.,
NEW YORK CITY.

DEAR SIR:

We have as yet received no answer to our favor of the 13th. We regret exceedingly to say that unless this bill is paid within ten days we will be forced to put the matter in the hands of a collector.

Very truly yours,
ACKARD & GODDARD.

Dic. G. R. G.

VIII

NEW YORK, October 20, 1908.

MR. JOHN COURTNEY,
NEW YORK CITY.

DEAR SIR:

We beg to inform you that your monthly installment upon the furniture rented from us is two weeks overdue. Our van will call tomorrow for it.

Very truly yours,
THOMPSON WILLOW CO.
Dic. T. R. Q.

IX

BALTIMORE, October 18, 1908.

DEAR JACK:

Inclosed is the one-fifty that you asked for. Don't mention it. I am glad to be of service. Called yesterday to see your folks. Your sister is looking charming. I hope soon to have news for you—but there, we won't talk of that at the moment.

Write me if I can send any more, for—well, old man, I am soon to be one of the family. The cat's out of the bag.

Sincerely,
HARRY.

X

NEW YORK, October 21, 1908.

MR. JOHN COURTNEY,
NEW YORK CITY.

MY DEAR MR. COURTNEY:

If you will drop in tomorrow at two we will draw up contracts and arrange terms for the production of your comedy.

Very truly yours,
KENNARDE & Co.,
Play Brokers,
per Charles J. Kennarde.

XI

NEW YORK, Today.

GOOD-BYE, Toodles. You're the best sort I ever knew, but I guess you were too good for me. But who could have told you? It's a lie, anyway. I want you to know that, now that it is all over. I have shown you my worst and not my

best. I meant to show you that, too, some day. What was it? A girl? So be it. I don't blame you, but come and see a body sometimes just for friendship's sake. We are not half as bad as we are painted, and some of us don't use paint at all. There is a lot of difference between fun and badness.

Here's luck to you, Toodles, whatever happens. I will be sitting in the front row the night of your play, if I have to pawn my last ring to do it.

K.

XII

BALTIMORE, October 22, 1908.

DARLING JOHN:

Come home and get kissed.

Sis.

P. S.—"I told you so."

Clipping from the New York *Maelstrom*, March 1, 1909:

A new comedy by a new writer, Mr. John Courtney, was presented last night by Mr. Charles J. Kennarde.

Mr. Courtney possesses freshness and an originality which evidently springs from first hand observation. His comedy may not be epoch making, but it has the merit of ringing true and being more than fairly amusing.

At bottom, Mr. Courtney's theme is conventional enough. It is the old situation of a young man struggling between his love for a "proper" woman and his friendship for an unconventional woman. But interwoven with this there is a clever study of Bohemian life, with all its trials and tribulations of unpaid bills and overdue rent. One scene was especially funny, that where the installment company from which Ridger has rented his furniture comes to take away the furnishings, leaving the luckless hero sitting upon his trunk and staring at four bare walls.

The acting was in the main adequate, Miss Thornay scoring in the part of Katherine, the unconventional friend, who sacrifices the man she loves to the woman to whom he is engaged. Miss Crump was sweet and pretty as the fiancée, beyond which qualifications the part did not call. Two minor roles, those of the sister and her lover, were splendidly done by Miss Clayton and Mr. Froude. The play bids fair to be . . .



NEPENTHE

By CAROLINE REYNOLDS

THE fire has died and the coals are dull; the sands from the glass have run;
 The sunshine fades in the tear-dimmed dusk; the day of our love is done.
 Our hearts still ache in their emptiness and cry for the days now fled.
 Our lips still quiver in tenderness for the dreams that are dear and dead.
 We had our love in its sweet content, the hours, the days, the years;
 We laughed at life in our joy of it, with laughter akin to tears.

We knew the clasp of a tender hand, the glance of the eyes that told
 The things our lips could not hope to speak—a tale that was new yet old.
 We lived our life in its fulsomeness, and what should the heart forget?
 We loved and lost, and the fire has died; but why should the heart regret?
 We dreamed our dreams in a paradise—and what if the night is gray?
 We drank the cup of our perfect joy. Dear heart, we have lived our day!

BLUE LIGHT

By MARIE BELDEN JAMES

THE Critic's room was big and bare and rich, and so skillfully unfurnished as to give a cold effect of marble and bronze. The red-brown metallic walls and ceiling exposed the whiteness of the marble floor, and the white tiles of the flooring expressed again the darkness of the bronze ceiling and walls. The big metal-bound center table, with its bronze file and ink-stand, and the five or six chairs set about were the only furniture; quite enough, however, for a room which held also a body strong as bronze, a heart impenetrable as marble and a mind cold and clear and mercilessly hard as either.

Body and heart and mind were the Critic himself, and he sat by the table as he would have sat anywhere else, making every color and tone and light serve him. His skin, not pale, but very white, showed sharply against his darkness, against the hair, red but burned darker, against the eyes, brown and burned brighter, against the deep crimson line of his lips and the deep auburn line of his eyebrows.

In a hundred different quarters of the city by other tables sat other men, writers working from gray morning to gray evening, and very often from gray evening back to gray morning again. Some the world called successful, some it called failures, but with the praises of the greatest or with the scorn of the smallest they would come by day or by night from their own tables to the Critic's. They would bring him their best—their firmest and hardest and truest—and he would draw his voice across it once or twice, and they would carry away the broken, mangled

fragments and go on with the weary work.

There were men among them who had come home from years of absence and gone to see the Critic before they saw their mothers. There was one man who had let his sister die alone while the Critic outlined to him three rules of Art. And there was the Scholar.

The Scholar never wrote—wherefore the Critic admired him. And he never criticized—wherefore he admired the Critic. And when he came home from six months on the Continent he went to see his mother and his sweetheart and his chums and unpacked his new books and had dinner at his club, and then in a leisure moment came to the bronze and marble room. And the Critic rose from his table to greet him, clasping his hand most heartily and cordially, and then went out, as far as any further guests were concerned. They talked on Norwegian painting for fifty-five minutes.

"Critic," said the Scholar finally, after a little silence had existed, "what have you done to the Boy?"

The Critic smiled a trifle coldly. "To what in him do you object?" he asked.

"You knew there was something, of course," the Scholar said admiringly. "Well, sir, I'll tell you. When I went away I left near you a boy writing verses *like* a boy, with a blue haze in his eyes. I was gone six months and when I come back I find him writing something like a fiend, and the blue haze has faded to almost nothing."

"But isn't it better," said the Critic, "that you should find him writing *something* instead of *verses*?" And his

voice made "something" the laurel-crowned word of the sentence.

"Well?" was all the Scholar answered.

The Critic laughed, pleased. "There's no drawing you from your point, is there, Scholar?" he said. "What did I do to him? Briefly, then, for it's a tiresome tale. You brought him here yourself, and I let him look about and admire my inkstand, and I let him go away with the feeling that he was coming again. He came and I played to him—"

"With him, you mean," interrupted the Scholar.

"To him," said the Critic. "Did you ever go fishing? You play the bait to the fish. After he's hooked you play *with* him. I played to the Boy. I played with books. I played with ideas. I played with words. I let him go wondering. He came again, and I played to him again and let him go—smiling. Again he came, and once more I played to him, and this time I let him go hoping, and, exactly as you said and had no business to say, with a blue haze across his eyes. He was hooked.

"Then he brought me some verses. The verses told of a lady and a first love and a vision of happiness. I annihilated the lady and I sneered at the first love and I jeered at the vision. He went away lonely.

"He brought me more verses. They were of a shipwreck and a stormy sea and two faithful friends and a white horizon line. I laughed at the shipwreck and chaffed at the sea and scoffed at the friends. But I let him go away with the horizon line.

"After that he came often with his loads of waste, and I always let him go with the part that would not burn, until I think— But he's coming tonight—now—in ten minutes—for the last time."

"For the last time?"

"Yes. And if you want to see him and know what I have done to him, sit over there behind the curtains."

The Scholar rose, smiling a little.

"Critic," he said, "you're an awful brute—but so am I." And he settled

himself behind the stiff bronzed curtains.

The Boy came in very quiet and different. The Scholar had seen him before, that day, but even since then he seemed to have changed. The Scholar knew him as permanently flushed; now he seemed permanently haggard. The Boy had been eager and impulsive; this man was still and mechanical. And the eyes—the eyes that even scholarly cynicism could not make commonplace—the eyes that had been like purple glow dashed with blue haze—they dulled in a dense gray waste with far, far behind it two tiny points of blue light.

He dropped silently into a chair and laid one typewritten sheet before the Critic. The Critic never raised his eyes, only placed one marble hand on the paper's edge and read. Then his harsh laugh—not the strained laugh of the Critic, but the rough mirth of the common man—made the Scholar jump. The Scholar parted the curtains a little more and saw the Critic lean back in his chair, every tense muscle relaxing.

"Mighty good!" he cried. "I say, young chap, I've had enough work to bring you to see that this is just what you ought to do. Publish that now and you'll bring my prices up double. What luck! It's such a bore for a chap like me to have to keep writing stuff every few weeks. But what's a man to do? If he's divorced his wife he's just got to pay the alimony, you know. I knew you were the one to do this stunt for me. That published and—why, my books will sell like books. Do me a lot more like that. You're made!" He laughed again and took up the sheet as if to reread. The Boy sat still for a moment, his hand resting on the table's edge even as the Critic's had first lain on the poem.

"Are you joking?" he said.

The Critic smiled. "Joking? I guess not! After all the trouble I've had to get you ready for use? Don't you see you're made? We're a partnership now. You do the work—give me the puff everywhere—and I get the pay. Of course there's a share for you."

The Boy sat still for a moment, and

his look traced the cold lines of the bronze and marble room. Then he rose, quiet and different again, and taking the sheet of paper tore it twice. Then he went out, leaving the pieces on the table. As he turned at the door the Scholar, looking out from behind the curtains, saw that his eyes were all gray; the points of blue light had gone.

It was several seconds before anything in the room moved. The Critic had straightened himself as the door closed, and sat now with folded arms and dark head bowed. Then the Scholar advanced slowly.

"Yes, it's the last time. But explain, please," he said. For answer the bent head motioned to the fragments on the table, and the Scholar, looking down, saw on the uppermost the poem's title, "A Poet's Tribute to His Master." He glanced again at the silent man of marble, and then traced

the cold lines of the room as the Boy had done.

"You are a murderer," he said. "You have murdered a soul."

"No," replied the Critic, and at the sound of his voice the Scholar shivered, "I am a creator. I have created the first—the only—man without a soul. And his wonderful, his unparalleled success will be what I have done."

The Scholar shook his head. "It is not so," he answered. "You have not created the first—the only— Who made you? You are also a man without a soul."

"No," repeated the Critic sharply, "I am not that. If I had been I should have let the poor boy keep his last delusion."

And as he raised his white face the other saw, down in the very depths of the cold bronze eyes, two points of blue light.



WIDOWS

WIDOWS make the most contented wives. They know what not to expect.

A widow and her weeds are soon parted.

A widow is never more dangerous than when she tells a youth that she was never really happy in her married life.

Behold the difference: For consolation the widow has her weeds, the widower his weed.

Never tell a widow that you are not worthy of her. She knows better.

Why isn't a grass widow green?



THE MAJOR: Watts's wife's a Suffragette.
THE COLONEL: What's Watts?
"A sufferer."

FROM THE SIDE LINES

By STUART F. PATTERSON

AFTER one's fifth refusal—from the same girl, I mean—it becomes a matter of art to observe the conventions.

However, as the game is the game, I endeavored to look as disconsolate as possible, and I flatter myself an observer would have been impressed by my gloom.

Not so Lydia. Being a young woman of astonishing perception, in addition to her more amiable qualities, she smiled broadly—grinned, I might have said—in the petulance of the moment.

The hardest self-confidence will ruffle at such treatment; and she had done the same thing on the two preceding occasions. Was I not young—passably young, at least? Was I not, if not handsome, at least presentable? And had I not loved her for years?

I had brought these considerations before her frequently, but she had brushed them aside as unworthy of her attention. So much for her American inheritance of the mercenary spirit and a sense of humor.

"Jimmy," she had whispered to me behind her fan—it was the third time, as I recall it now—at the Langdon's dinner, at any rate—"I could never manage it. I should laugh at the very altar rail when you got to the place about, 'All my worldly goods I thee endow.'"

After that, I ask, what could a man do but devote himself to the salted almonds? And, in spite of time, her attitude on the subject remained unchanged.

On this particular afternoon, however, I had come as near to meaning all those things a man says at such

moments as I had ever done. Lydia certainly looked charming. Her dress was one of those captivating fluffinesses which would have driven old Robert Herrick into verse. Her hair was arranged—I say "arranged" after some days of consideration—in a most bewitching carelessness over her dainty ears. And then that certain, uncertain, little dimple near her elbow! Mitigating circumstances, truly.

It has occurred to me since that there might have been some conscious casual connection between the existence of that dimple and the length of Lydia's sleeve. The idea, however, is only an afterthought. Indeed, if one could notice such—shall I say coincidences?—at the time, a number of married men would be married to someone else, and some of us, still unmarried, would have been spared moments of humiliation.

Some time when I am old enough to ask impertinent questions I intend publishing a book. "The Complete Angler," I shall call it, and a number of my friends will find enlightenment therein as to the manner of their capture. The thing is really much more artistic in execution—not to say much more ladylike—than the rough hunting of the Shawesque heroine.

All of this is mere spite and bitterness of spirit, of course.

"What are you going to do this time?" asked Lydia, cheerfully interrupting, I may say, my mental comparison of myself with an excellent Hamlet I had seen the week before.

When Lydia looks at one in a particular way one smiles. I smiled—sadly, I hope—but yet I smiled.

"I suppose it's drink or poison, as before," I answered.

"I knew that. I merely asked to appear interested," said she.

"You don't seem to care," I complained.

"Would it do any good if I did care?" she answered. "I know it will be the drink, anyway."

That is what one pays for the pleasure of proposing to Lydia, but the laugh which followed would have cheered a sybarite—or whatever those persons are who live in caves and deserts and shun feminine society—which, I may add, I am not. I rose to the occasion.

"Farewell, my love, farewell forever more! My hat is in yon hall. My cab waits at the door," I declaimed dramatically.

"But it doesn't really. You mean the Madison Avenue cars run by the corner, and all cars transfer to the Nightwatch. You needn't go yet, though. I will get you one drink—even two—in the dining room. Have you forgotten father's Irish?"

"Do not tempt me, Lydia. I seek that particular oblivion dispensed at the Nightwatch. By practice I know to within a half-dozen glasses how much is too much. Good-bye."

"If you were not so silly, Jimmy, I'd lecture you. And it's really awfully kind of you to propose to me now and then. You're really the only regular proposer I have left now," she said.

My interest awoke.

"Peter?" I asked.

"Oh, Peter's married, of course."

"But Jamison?"

"Gone. Fled. That red-haired Gilmore girl, you remember."

"Traitor! But Freddie Borup? Why, every week Freddie missed he went to church the next Sunday. Has he—"

"His engagement to a Boston girl will be announced next week."

"Serves him right. Well, there's the latest, Jack Morton. He is absurdly bashful, of course, but I should think you might manage—"

Something made me look up at Lydia just then, and I stopped. I do not know to this day exactly why, but

somehow, as I looked at her my heart began to beat very tenderly for the girl before me; something quite different from my emotions of a half-hour before, and I realized what an ass I was making of myself.

"I ask pardon, Lydia, I really do," I stammered, and she stood there without answering but with a brave little smile on her lips as I backed out of the door somehow.

I walked the twenty-odd blocks up the avenue in the deepest humility, feeling as though all the world were pointing me out as the one monumental, hopeless chump.

I reached the club at length, and turned to the advertisements of motor cars in the back of a magazine.

I know of no more optimistic literature in the world if one is fortunate enough not to own a car, and this in connection with well timed thumbing of the call button.

I was regaining to some extent my normal cheerfulness when who should enter but this same Jack Morton whose name had so abruptly terminated my visit of the afternoon!

I had always liked Morton—one of the big, clean-cut sort, and in his day a terror on the football field under the old rules; a wholesome, healthy young brute with a laugh to set glasses tinkling, and at the club a welcome addition to any table.

He had spent a number of years entirely with men in the West and had sojourned all along the edges of the inhabited world, and this explained, I suppose, why he mumbled and blushed and drew his feet under his chair in the presence of a certain Miss Lydia Graham, whom he could have bundled into his arms and run away with—something, I warrant, which had never occurred to him. His abject devotion to Lydia had been a matter of mirth to the rest of us for a year past, and, personally, I had thought she treated him rather shabbily. This afternoon I had by chance discovered the lay of the land.

If I were a man of emotion, I might confess to the least twinge of envy as

Morton sat down at my table. It may have been the three drinks—and yet I rarely become magnanimous on three; at any rate, a sudden desire to assist this blundering, blind young man came over me; an overwhelming wish to smooth the rough course of true love.

I welcomed him, and pressed upon him a cigar. We were in a quiet corner and the confidences came easily with my adroit leading.

I fancy an ancestor of mine must at some time have been a very skillful Oriental diplomat. If so, I did him justice, I think.

For the hundredth time I listened to the catalogue of Lydia's virtues—I had them by heart myself these few years back.

And then, when the moment arrived, I took up the tale of womankind and told Morton some things I knew of the sex: some things I had read and the many things that I suspected. I agreed, of course, that Lydia was not like other women. That was a point upon which he was quite firm, but I did not let this premise interfere with my deductions.

I fancy my dissertation was rather well done on the whole, for on leaving him at the end of an hour I detected the glint of a purpose in his eyes, which I hoped Lydia would appreciate on its fulfillment.

At eleven o'clock that evening I sat in the same corner of the club waiting for Morton to appear with the report of a victory.

The means of celebration stood prepared upon the table, and I had just put my name to the check when he strode toward me. Instead of rushing to embrace me and shower blessings on my head, however, he bore a horrific front of gloom. In place of the beatific smile which I judged to be my due, he turned upon me a visage black with resentment.

I was rather perplexed for the moment, but as I regarded him my confidence returned with the certainty that in some way he had botched the affair and made a fool of himself.

No man's temper is proof against that, and I advanced to the attack.

Accepting his growl as a greeting, or, at the least, a concession of my existence, I waved an inviting hand toward the decanter.

"Pleasant evening," I remarked with an affectation of mere interest.

Bronchial rumblings of profane suggestion came from Morton.

"Not at home, I suspect," and I smiled blandly. The tense silence before the storm lasted while I conferred with the waiter touching the matter of two cigars.

When that most useful friend of man had gone and returned and gone once more, I received my baptism of abuse. It would serve no purpose to set it down at length. Some of it was pure idiocy, some merely tiresome, and what was interesting was unfit to print.

The general purport was that I was a false friend, a cad, a brute—well, all that a man is under such circumstances, granting the speaker's premises. My smiles seemed to increase the verbal voltage, and I confess I smiled frequently as I listened. The story, after a wandering and excited introduction, approached the crisis at last, and the memory of it steadied the pace, so to speak.

"And so we were alone there in the library, and it wasn't very light, you see—just light enough to see, you know, and she—that is, Lydia—she was standing quite close to me— She didn't know it, of course; you see, I had followed her quite closely and she didn't know I was so near behind her, you understand."

"Of course not. How could she?" I assented.

"And so I—things—the light, you know—" he stammered.

"Oh, yes, I know." I hurried to the rescue. "Let me tell you. She turned around toward you all of a sudden, and her face was quite close to yours—and it seemed as if a sort of mist got into your eyes—and her face suddenly seemed very far away and yet terribly near—and your temples began to throb and your heart didn't beat at all and

your hands got dry and tingling—and all the time your silly knees shook and you couldn't catch your breath for the lump in your throat—and there was nothing left of all the world except those two half-closed eyes shining up at you from God knows where—and—well, and what?" I concluded.

Morton twisted in his chair and looked at me suspiciously.

"Look here," he demanded, "have you ever—damn it all—"

"No, my son, never," I interrupted.

"But no woman but Lydia—" he began.

"None any longer," I agreed. "But there have been. All dead or married now. Three, I remember at the moment."

"Look here, Phillips, I wish you'd cut out that rot. Thisthing is serious for me."

"How serious? What did you find you'd done when you came to?"

He hesitated, but there was a singing note in the words as he spoke them.

"I kissed her!"

He waited for the applause, I fancy, but as I kept silent he went on humbly enough.

"And she ran over to the table and leaned against it, awfully white, you know, and she held a hand over her heart for a bit, and then her cheeks got terribly red and—well, you could see she was awfully angry."

"Quite properly so, I'm sure," I put in.

"Well, after a bit she lit into me. Told me I was no gentleman, and that I had insulted her, and she hated me and never wanted to see me again. And then she began to cry as if her heart would break, and she looked so sweet and helpless and—"

"Yes, yes," I exclaimed, "but in heaven's name, what were you about all this time?"

"Why, I don't know exactly. You see, there seemed to be nothing left for me to do. I couldn't say anything nor explain. She had just said she hated the sight of me, and so, you know, I came away as quickly as I could."

I sat up in my chair and stared, for I had aided and abetted a fool.

"You—came—away?" I repeated

it very slowly for the sake of absolute accuracy.

"Why, yes—"

"You—came—away!" I repeated again. "And you left that poor lady crying her eyes out, and all because she happened to say that she hated you! Gad, you would deserve it all, and I herewith add my contempt. Here I spoil a whole afternoon and evening to help you, sacrifice my peace of mind toward your instruction and waste sage counsel on you, and my reward is that you 'came away'! Morton, I wash my hands of you. Lydia is too nice a girl to be entrusted to such a blundering fathead. You're hopeless—beyond comprehension!" I stopped in sheer indignation.

"But, look here, old man, what could I do? What am I to do?" he began.

One cannot lead a little child into the dark woods and leave it there from spite, and so, fortified and uplifted by more than a little of the courage called "Dutch," I took Morton by the hand, so to speak, and led him to the Summit of Understanding, to point out to him the vast waste places of his ignorance. I took him upon my knee and instructed him painfully in the rudiments of his own density, spreading before him with infinite patience and detail the picture of his chaotic idiocy, and then I left him, I flatter myself, an incoherent, protesting pulp.

I went out and took the late train for Boston. I had to go to Boston, in any event, and it seemed the dramatic, if desperate, thing to do.

All this was a week ago.

I met Morton and Lydia yesterday afternoon in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. They were resting in one of the more secluded corners, and as everyone who passed them smiled knowingly, I smiled knowingly. It seems now I am to be Morton's best man. I have promised Lydia never, never to tell anything. Likewise I have promised Morton.

And—well, I am to be best man at the wedding and I shall kiss the bride; which, after all, is something I have been trying to do for years.

WHY WE FALL IN LOVE WITH ACTRESSES

By GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

"WHY are there so few old maids on the stage?"
"Because the stage doesn't want them."

"No. Because men have married them."

This bit of conversation occurred across a luncheon table at Sherry's a few weeks ago. The question was asked by a novelist, and was answered first by the man sitting opposite him, a well known playwright, and finally by their woman companion, one of the best and most popular of the younger American actresses of today.

"It is the trite but true saying," the actress continued, "that the stage is the greatest matrimonial bureau in the world." The number of proposals of marriage that the speaker has received during her brilliant theatrical career has been limited, as she once confidentially expressed it to one of her women friends, only by the number of names on her calling list.

"If I may be permitted to ask an equally worn-out question," put in the novelist, "tell me just what there is about stage women that makes men, so many, many men, fall in love with them. I know the thing has been written up, talked over and jotted down from time's immemorial day, but give me your frank opinion. And, if need be, allow your opinion to be as disillusioning as Lady Frederick's morning toilet was disillusioning to her youthful admirer."

The actress looked up from her *demi-tasse* at her inquisitor with a little I-suppose-you-dare-me-to-be-original smile.

"Now, now, we will understand," the novelist put in quickly; "don't be bashful. Present complacency always excepted, you know."

"Well, then," the lady began, "the biggest factor of all, I believe, is the unanalyzed, oft repeated element of glamour—the glamour that two years ago caused the eldest son of a noble British house to marry a musical comedy actress who, before her entrance into a Broadway chorus, had been scrubbing floors in a house near Madison Square; the glamour that in recent years has won six American millionaires and twice that many foreign counts and lords."

"And just what in your honest opinion is this glamour?" interposed the playwright.

"Is this the third degree?" archly inquired the actress.

"Only in the interest of justice—to two poor bachelors," the novelist ventured.

"The glamour," she continued, "is in reality almost nothing. It exists to a great extent only in the mind of the man. His day's work is finished. He has put on evening clothes, finished a good dinner, swallowed a tingling cordial and feels great. He goes to the theater in what a hypnotist might term a submissive state. He expects the glamour and he gets it. He sees the actress looking her very best—as best as artful make-up and attractive costumes can make her. He hears her applauded by men in the same mood as he is—a fact that he does not stop to ponder over. He hears a fellow man say to a friend, 'She's a beauty.' He

hears another say the same thing to his friend. And he begins to believe it.

"The man sees the actress during just the two and one-half hours of the day when she is at her best—and then at a distance; and distance certainly lends enchantment to an actress."

"Distance—and the photographer," meanly interrupted the playwright.

"Man doesn't get the opportunity of studying a woman on the stage at the close range he can study her sister who isn't on the stage. After he has met the actress, their subsequent *tête-à-têtes* are usually after the theater, in the shadow of soft-shaded electroliers and in the sound of sweet music. He doesn't meet her at dinner with her family the way he does the 'home girl' and he doesn't come in touch with her homely mother or her poor, cranky father."

"You think, then, that parents are disillusioning?" asked the novelist.

"I should say they are," emphatically replied the actress, "especially the Mas and Pas of actresses. Of course there are exceptions, but you'll find pretty generally that a pretty actress's mother is anything but beautiful and of anything but an artistic nature. Then, too, her father may be—or may have been, until she started to earn big money—a butcher or a circus acrobat—eminently respectable professions, but hardly glamorous."

"An author I know," put in the novelist, "once wrote: 'The more I love you, the less I want to meet your kith and kin.'"

The lady smiled. "I'll wager he had one of us actresses in mind," she said.

"You will find," continued the "witness," as she called herself, "that in almost all the cases of well known men who have married actresses the men have been—and probably still are—vain men. Their vanity was gratified by being seen in public with the actress, by believing that their friends were jealous of them, by hearing their names linked at the club during their courtship days with the name of the stage favorite in question, by dropping into the theater where she was playing with a nonchalant, proprietary air and by

twenty and one other similar vanity pleasing things."

"But don't you believe that if the actress the man married had not been an actress at all, but simply a little 'home girl,' as you've termed it—don't you believe if he had met her he would have fallen in love with her and married her just the same—vanity or no vanity?" asked the novelist.

"My dear, dear man," replied the actress, "certainly not." Then with a change of voice: "What do you think of my honesty?"

"Fine," said the playwright, "fine so far—but go on."

"All right," she continued, "I'll prove it to you, and I won't have to mention the names of the persons concerned, either, because you will be able to recall them with the greatest ease. It's the case of the wealthy Pittsburg man who died a few years ago. You remember he married a girl on the stage in spite of the awful rumpus put up by his family. The girl was born in Pittsburg and had lived there until she started on her theatrical career. Although her social sphere did not theoretically touch that of the man, they met several times in their native city. But the man paid no attention whatsoever to the girl, and it is related that, when one of his friends was told in later years that he had married her, he exclaimed, 'Why, he used to say he could never see anything in her.'

"A number of years afterward, when the girl had become widely known through her stage work, the man chanced to meet her at a party in New York. It wasn't long afterward that he confided to several of his acquaintances that he was 'dead in love with her'—and then he married her."

"Yes," added the playwright, "and there is a similar instance that will bear out what you say—the case of that other actress from the Middle West who, after creating a name for herself in the theater, captured the erstwhile recalcitrant heart of a man from her home town."

The novelist, putting down his iced mint, lighted a cigarette and after a

pause said: "I've heard them say that an actress's way of talking to a man has a lot to do with 'catching' him. Just what, dear lady, is meant by 'way of talking'?"

"Oh," she gurgled, "that's the easiest question you've asked me, and I'll let you into the secret. An actress, from her stage experience, has learned the psychology of audiences. She has learned what will make them smile, laugh, frown or cry. She has learned the difference between—well, the New York type of audience and the Boston type of audience, between the Chicago type of audience and the Los Angeles sort. Her professional experience has shown her each of their idiosyncrasies. And just as she has come to learn the moods of big groups of people and the way to cater to them, just so, as if by second nature, does she know how to get in touch with the moods and whims of the individual man. That's why the man feels that the actress understands him better than any girl he ever met—even after he has known her for only a few hours."

"Let's be specific," suggested the playwright, "and hear just how you would talk to a man whom you were meeting for the first time—one in whom you had conceived a sudden interest, and one whom you wished to be interested in you—a chap, I mean, with whom you didn't feel you were wasting your time,"

The actress looked across the table at the playwright with one of those quiz-zical little smiles of hers that at various times have put a lump in the throat of many a fellow in the audience.

"All right—but tell me just what type of man to keep in mind for my illustration," she said.

"Well," answered the playwright, "take me, for instance."

"Oh, no," said the actress quickly and with a self-confident little laugh; "that wouldn't be a fair illustrative test. It would be too easy."

"Take simply a type of man, no particular one—let us say, for instance, a well educated Wall Street man," suggested the novelist.

"We will call him Mr. Brown," said the playwright. "Miss Blank, Mr. Brown. Consider yourself introduced."

The actress paused a moment. Then she began:

"After a short while Mr. Brown and I find ourselves temporarily separated from the others. He repeats to me that he thinks my performance simply splendid. I impulsively extend my hand to him and tell him in a soft, vibrant voice that I'm so happy he likes my work. 'It means so much more,' I say, 'coming from a man like you, whose head is full of business affairs.'"

"Mr. Brown then gives a little laugh and assures me that Wall Street men are not always as busy as some people believe. I laugh a little, too, and say, 'Well, then, some time when you're not so busy we must have tea together and you must tell me all about your work.'"

"In these few minutes, you see, I have shown Mr. Brown that I am interested in his work, have flattered him as a 'man of affairs' and have indicated that I should like to see him again. That impulsive handshake bit of acting quickened his heart more than a 'home girl' could have accomplished in the course of three hours' arch conversation."

"After this," she continued, "I touch lightly and only momentarily on a wide range of topics, the Opera, art galleries, motoring, golf and so on until Mr. Brown betrays in which one of them he is most interested. Then I get a good point to work from in the future. I sprinkle my conversation with a wee confidential tone every once in a while and, above all things, I make myself a 'good listener,' taking the greatest interest in everything he says. A seemingly careless word dropped now and then, an *insouciant*, intimate reference to something about myself, a 'dear' that slips from my lips—all these are other tricks of mine. And Mr. Brown, gentlemen, after the very short time he has known me, feels that we have more in common than he ever had or could have with any girl in his Avenue set."

"Don't 'home girls' know those same tricks, though?" asked the novelist.

"Um-um," the actress said, shaking her head, "you'll find, generally, that they do not. It takes them weeks to get on a companionship basis with a man, where it takes an actress only hours. 'Home girls,' too, usually harp on one or two conversational subjects. They do not know the little 'familiarities' that the actress has rehearsed and can act out to perfection. They are unable to simulate a spirit of frankness as well as the actress; they are handicapped by chaperons—and show me the man who doesn't hate the chaperon—and they frequently have no other interest in life than to dress up. Then, also, they don't give a man as many competitors, or rivals, to fight against as a girl on the stage, and there's nothing that'll make a man fall more in love—and more quickly—than a lot of other fellows after the same girl."

The actress moistened her lips with the pony of *Bénédicte* before her. "Gee," she said girlishly, "I wish I could have a cigarette."

"You smoke?" inquired the novelist in a more or less surprised tone.

"Very little," she replied, "but I always wish for a cigarette whenever I'm with a man. It's just a teeny bit naughty, and the man always likes it."

The playwright smiled toward the novelist. "I wonder if the charming lady is beginning to exercise her wiles on us two unsuspecting table companions?"

The "charming lady" did not say anything. The orchestra started playing a languorous waltz melody, and the three analysts sat silent for a while listening.

"Wonderful, isn't it?" remarked the novelist when the musicians had finished.

"A melody like that gets to your heart strings," added the playwright.

"Even so," said the actress, "and it has been music like that—in some cases just a simple little tuneful song—that has won a husband for many a comic opera girl. Cupid has heeded the lyric 'Follow On' just as he has flatteringly answered why they called her a Gibson Girl. And Cupid caused Rhoda to

abandon her pagoda for a Long Island country mansion in just the way he set the heart of the head of a great corporation a-tingle with the lilting 'Mocking Bird' melodies."

"There is one way, though, in which I can't see how an actress can appeal to a man," argued the novelist.

"And that is—" asked the actress.

"In the 'home' way," said the novelist. "An actress does not suggest or hold forth the possibilities of real home life to a man—that is, taking an actress generally as a type of woman."

"The answer to that," answered the actress, "is that this is not a 'home' age. It's a day of apartment house life, of hotel life, of travel—and, anyway, I hardly believe the old-fashioned 'home life' appeals as much to the men of today as it did to the men of yesterday. Home life may be comfortable, but it lacks novelty and, lacking novelty, does not ultimately interest the modern type of man."

The novelist lighted a fresh cigarette and remained lost in reflection for a moment. "Tell me," he said finally, turning to the actress, "if two women, one a stage woman, the other a woman in private life, were very much in love with the same man; if the man were equally fond of both women, and if it resolved itself into a contest between the women to see who could win the man—in such a supposed case which would be victorious, the actress or the other woman? What is your opinion?"

Without a second's hesitation the lady at the table declared that the actress would win the man.

"And why?" asked the man who had propounded the question.

"Because," answered the lady, "the actress, in addition to possessing a great many of the other woman's wiles and attractions, would be able to simulate those others that she didn't have and, by her training in acting, would, in what would appear to the man an entirely unconscious way, go each of her rival's wiles one better."

"But if the man down in his heart had a hankering for home life—if he were that sort, what then?"

"Then, if the actress loved him, you can wager your last penny she would be a good enough actress to impress the man with the idea that she'd make the nicest, comfiest, snuggliest little fireside wifey in the world. The example of one of our splendid actresses of five years ago, who married a New England aristocrat and retired from the stage, bears out what I say, as does the similar case of the charming little actress who married a socially popular Englishman who is at present the head of big electrical interests in the West."

"You are quite convincing, I must say," volunteered the novelist.

"I thank you," smiled the actress. Then, turning to the playwright, she said: "You've been so quiet, you must have been thinking over some phase of the question very seriously. What is it?"

"I have been thinking it over—not only now, but for a long time," answered the man, who has written three of the most successful plays of the last two seasons. "Although I agree with several of the reasons you have set forth for the falling in love of men with stage women, I've analyzed the case fundamentally differently. And I am borne out in my analysis—if it's worth anything—by the coinciding opinions of two of my brother playwrights. Both of the latter married women in private life."

The actress encouraged him to divulge the result of his analysis.

"We three writers of plays," he said, "talked the matter over and came to the conclusion that it was not the actress as a woman, as herself, that men were fascinated by, but that they were fascinated by and really fell in love with the character she interpreted, the character that the playwright had studied out and given her, with the tears and the smiles that he had written into her stage being. And that character, which by her continued stage portrayal she had made almost her own, and which the man of the audience in time subconsciously imagined to be really her own—that character is what he fell in love with."

"Well, what about the playwright who recently married the actress who played the role he wrote for her? Surely he wasn't fooled the way you say the man of the audience was and is," said the actress.

"Yes he was—and in only a slightly different way at that," the playwright answered. "He built up a splendid, sympathetic woman's character with her in mind; he gave her qualities she didn't possess; he gave her wit and all that—and then, when she played the part and gave body to his ideal, why, he fell in love with her—not as herself, but as the woman his pen had created and which she subsequently portrayed. They say a man puts the woman he loves on a pedestal, but, in the case of a man in love with an actress, I say the playwright has already put her on a written pedestal and the man simply makes the pedestal higher."

The actress leaned over the table, her interest greatly aroused. "I had never thought of it in that way," she said, "but I think there's a lot in what you say. Your argument seems to be borne out, too, by the fact that men seem rarely to fall in love with actresses who play unsympathetic roles. I can't think of a single so called 'big stage match' in which the actress who married the man hadn't played a heroic or, anyway, an attractive part of some sort or other. It's certainly true in straight dramatic work, and in the musical field almost all the parts are more or less attractive."

"By George," put in the novelist, "come to think of it, it would be pretty hard for me to imagine falling in love with a woman who could play the part of the catty, selfish woman I've written into my last novel—if the novel were dramatized. Even if I knew her well personally, if she could interpret that role convincingly I think I'd begin to be a bit suspicious of her nature off stage. But," after a pause, "I admit I'd like to know the girl who could act my heroine."

And the heroine of the novel in question is a very probable creature. She lives in the United States, not in Zenda.

"One more question," said the actress to the playwright: "How do you account for actors who have married actresses?"

"That hasn't been love primarily. It has been really a working partnership, seasoned with a similar-sphered companionship. And you have numerous illustrations that go to show that as soon as the partnership has lost its theatrical value a separation has resulted."

There was another lapse into silence. The orchestra began playing, "Quand L'Amour Meurt." The novelist lighted another cigarette. The playwright toyed with his cordial glass. The actress fooled with the matchstand.

The music stopped and the actress began pulling on her gloves. A wee smile played around the corners of her mouth.

"Look here," she said suddenly, "this has been a session of the Court of Honesty, hasn't it?"

The men looked at her as if in doubt as to what was coming.

"Hasn't it?" she repeated insistently.

"Why, yes," answered both the novelist and the playwright.

"Well, then," said the actress, "let the end of it be honest. What caused each of you to propose to me during this last year?"

The men began to fidget nervously. They looked at each other, then at her.

"Because—because—" they began confusedly.

"Because why?" she demanded.

And they both agreed that it was simply because she was a woman, a nice, sweet, lovable, congenial woman.

So you see, you never can tell.



SHE

By J. C. GERNDT

A SUNNY sparkle in a pool,
 A flash and a surprise,
 A mist that's drawn across the stars,
 Her eyes.
 A touch of vapor and of fire,
 A humming bird that sips
 The torrid teardrops from the rose,
 Her lips.
 A garden filled with fadeless flowers,
 Where lilies bloom apart—
 The wonder is that garden's mine—
 Her heart.

NO man ever got the better of his wife in an argument without regretting it.

CARNIVAL

By THOMAS SAMSON MILLER

THE opalescent African dawn tipped the gray olives of the mountain slopes, whitened the flat, crowded roofs of Las Palmas, shot over the sheening waters of the bay, and heliographed day on the binnacles of two liners sleeping side by side within the breakwater. From the cactus gardens of the English hotel oasising the bleached road leading from wharf to town rose an angry woman's sobbing.

Suddenly a girlish figure in a mask and the flaunting scarlet of carnival costume broke from the shrubbery and ran into the hotel. She flew up the wide stairway and down the corridor to Room 17 and tapped hurriedly on its panel. A woman's voice within demanded, "Who's there?" The girl called back: "I—Rose. Let me in." The door opened and a girl in a loose wrapper stood back to let the other pass ere she closed and locked the door again.

The one tore off her mask, disclosing features so strongly resembling the other's that the two would have been taken for twin sisters. She started hastily getting out of her dress, gasping out disjointed sentences:

"Such a night! Oh, I've medicined him; there'll be no more scenes, I'll promise you."

"What have you done? Rosie, what have you done?" the girl in the wrapper gasped.

"Be innocent, Clytie; then you won't have to fib when he comes up. He never suspected; he thought it was you all the time. I've given him the fright of his life. Help me with this hook."

Clytie caught her arms. "Tell me

what happened; you must, or I won't know how to carry it off."

"Nothing to carry off, sis; just be asleep and innocent. My, I'd give a fortune to see his face when he learns!" She stepped out of her skirt and apostrophized it. "Lie there and mystify him. Lend me a wrapper, Clytie. Now go to bed, and don't worry. Good night." She kissed her companion and tripped away to her own room.

From the cactus slowly emerged an unjestful Jester and, pondering heavily, unmindful of the jingle of his cap's bells, entered the hotel. Close behind him rose a big, sleek, blond man in khaki. He, too, made for the hotel, but was arrested by the tramp of feet and the clank of a sword against a spurred heel; he waited, with his eyes expectantly on the twin palms guarding the entrance to the gardens.

Three fixed bayonets, and a young officer swung into the grounds with a badly besmirched Pierrot in their ranks. The prisoner's eyes fell on the khaki figure and at once appealed to it.

"Major, you're the very man. Kindly convince this idiot that I'm not a brigand or a revolutionist, or whatever he takes me to be,"

The Spanish officer gave a careless nod of acquaintanceship to the Major.

"You know my prisoner, eh, Major? He claims to be an American, but from the British boat."

"He is an American. He has shared my cabin since Old Calabar," the Major answered with categorical directness. "He came down from Sokoto, where he has been prospecting for a railroad for a London syndicate. His name is Ar-

thur Gurney. He registered as such here last night."

"Thanks, Major; your word is sufficient." The officer turned to his prisoner and apologized. "Many pardons, señor; but the circumstances were, you will allow, suspicious." The American agreed with a sheepish grin. The officer saluted, gave the command to his men and marched away.

The Major gripped the American's arm.

"Where the devil did you get to? What happened? But, there, you want sleep."

"Sleep! Do I look like sleep? Holy smoke! I'm going to be Johnny on the spot when the Americans go down to their boat. Maybe I'll transfer, or go on to London, turn in my report and then double over to Paris or Rome and cut in on their itinerary; it depends on how the girl takes this brooch." He pulled from his pocket a filigree silver souvenir. "I don't know; she's that sort that you never do really know until you're married, and then not always."

"Rather sudden, isn't it?" the Major drawled.

"Things *were* sudden last night—too sudden for your stiff English respectability, perhaps." Gurney dropped into a split cane seat cuddled in a clump of prickly pear.

"So I suppose." The Englishman, too, sat. "What happened after you slipped us?"

"*Me slipped you!* Gee, that's good! Why, you shot down that arbor after your pink and white Britannia like a Nubian getting away with a purse, and left me with the bunch. Great Scott! You saw that Carnival, the American girl—"

"Hold on. How do you know she is American?"

"How — do — I — know — she's — American! How do I know a racehorse from a hackney, a yacht from a barge, a gazelle from a hartebeest? Man, her rolling, rich 'r's' and wild darning come from only one quarter of the world, and its radius is not far from 'Frisco.'"

"She seems to have impressed you," the Englishman drily commented.

"Impressed me! Three years of Sokoto's sun and niggers and burnt powder sands, with never a white woman's soul nor voice nor eyes in all that starved while! Impressed! I'm going to trail her through Rome, Greece, Egypt, Palestine—that is, if she takes this toy aright. I don't know—I did things last night—insane things—lied myself into heaven—played the cad. I was drunk with those twanging strings and trolling voices and the frolic and the freshness of the rain-washed streets and that damned moon—Look! It is not gone yet!"

He pointed to a pale orb above the Atlantic.

"You'll be better after a sleep; you look as if you had a touch of fever," the Major opined.

"Fever! I am possessed of a devil—a sweet devil in a mask and with a pair of talking eyes! Gee, how she played them! I found them on me when I turned from laughing at your chase, inscrutable, coquetting, teasing. I edged to her, whispering, 'Pierrot is forlorn.'"

"'Poor Pierrot!' she sighed tauntingly. 'And Carnival all around!'"

"That could be taken two ways. I took it in its personal sense. I retorted, 'Carnival has a Jester,' giving a side glance to that pernicious fool in cap and bells.

"She gave a lilt to her little raven head and came back at me: 'Pierrot has his Marguerite.' She meant that bold jade who joined us with that Spanish troupe from the Casino.

"Then that confounded Jester shoved his nose into our whispering. I was ripe for a row with him, but too uncertain of my ground. I set my wits to cutting her out of the bunch. My blood was running at flood and my pulses throbbing like a dynamo when we got into the Calle Major; I meant business. We came to a little triangular garden thick set with lilac bushes. I edged to the girl's skirt and waited. Two wanton Canarians endowed their idle loves on Jester. He pushed them

from him, having eyes only for Carnival. They avenged themselves by knocking off his hat. As he bent to the dust I turned on Carnival. She slipped away into the shrubbery. I sprang after her all afire. I caught her hands—when that damned Jester's bells tinkled in our ears. We flew apart, and I controlled myself to a calm, matter of fact, 'Let me reach it for you.' I nipped a spray of lilac.

"'Thank you,' she said and fixed the bloom jauntily in her raven coils, and the three of us soberly overtook the party, Jester grinning sardonically whenever our eyes met. I could have choked him. And why was the girl so dainty of his feelings? So we came out in the cathedral plaza and merged into the crowd round the one-horse military band. I clung to Carnival desperately, and so did Jester, with that wicked Marguerite clinging as desperately to me. Say, but 'Music and Morals' would make a great essay; there was a lascivious flutist in the band who played our passions as seductively as wine steals one's wit. And if his eliding sobs and haunting melodies were not enough, the band struck up 'The Star-Spangled Banner,' the local authorities having the tail end of a yarn that this was Roosevelt's party. You bet the Americans yelled. Jester let fly his provincialism—flung his cap into the air. I seized the opportunity this patriotic burst offered. I caught Carnival and whipped her round a fountain and down a crazy flight of stone steps into the archaic cathedral cloisters. She hadn't a show of resistance, but brought up exhausted against a sculptured friar, her eyes behind their peep holes daring me. She raised the devil in me; I sprang at her—when she cold-douched me.

"'If you are a gentleman, you will take me back,' she said, and stiffened her features into inexpression.

"I bowed very correctly, and maybe a little sarcastically, but sensibly recognized her feminine claim. I followed her up to the plaza, three correct steps between our persons, until she escaped from me, to appear so quietly at the side of Jester that he was still

anxiously searching the crowd when she touched his arm.

"I slopped to a table and called for a bottle of Madeira. Perhaps I was sulking; anyway, I was mad. I wanted to cool off, but that torturing flutist took up that distressful ecstasy, 'La Paloma.' Its passionate yearnings and quivering plaints caught the crowd. My Marguerite sprang to a marble top and took up the notes with wicked abandon. Man, she could sing! They all can; it's their life—song, dance and desire. Her last sob found me at her feet offering her wine. We toasted with Spanish dramatic ceremony and devotional extravagance. I looked around for Carnival; she should see that she was not the only pebble on the beach. But my inflated enthusiasm fell before her scornful throwback. Then in quick revulsion I was intoxicated with my power to anger her. I pushed my way to her—carelessly, insanely—disregarding Jester's cocked ears, and avouched: 'It was not the girl; it was her song. I swear it was not the girl.' She came back at me, as almost any girl would: 'You have been drinking. You insult me.'

"I cooled somewhat at that, then grew hot in anger, seeing only that she had been playing her eyes on me all the evening, raising and dropping me as she liked and ping-ponging me against Jester. In a mad humor I came at her with the Toccata of Galuppi's:

"'Was a lady such a lady, cheeks so round and lips so red—
On her neck the small face buoyant, like a
bellflower on its bed,
O'er the breast's superb abundance, where a
man might base his head?'

"It was a frontal attack to which she had neither defense nor defiance. She looked panicky for retreat. Jester was there to furnish it. She touched his arm.

"'Let's go back to the Casino,' she said.

"But he was the maddest Jester ever. He put his arm firmly through hers, with a beastly sense of proprietorship, and growled: 'We'll go back to the hotel, if I have any say.'

"*You may,*" she coolly replied; "I'm going to the dancing." She raised her voice: "Who's for the Casino?"

"A dozen American voices answered her, and we moved away with one impulse, Jester stubbornly accompanying. I got to brawling with him.

"*Why the devil don't you go home?*" I yelled. "What's this lady to you that you should pester her with your surly company?"

"His face was as white as the night, but he stilled his heat to reply: 'That, sir, is a question I am asking myself. I had thought— But never mind; we shall most likely discover our relationship before this damned night is over. It is an odd world,' he added with grim sarcasm. He cut on after the girl.

"The troupe—the same old gang of clowns, shepherdesses, sprites and crusaders—had gotten into a narrow gut of Venetian-shuttered stucco houses. Carnival was in the lead, beside the liquid piccolo that rhythmized our feet and pulses. Jester elbowed his way to her without compunction for ribs or gender. I was kept in the rear by the press and the attentions of Marguerite. But I stalked the little tossing black head and the low, rich laughter that tantalized above the rustle of swinging skirts and the slush of twinkling feet with but one object, hope, determination: sooner or later I would have her where I could force some sort of show-down. At the foot of the alley we broke into the Paseo and ran into another bunch of gay ones. In the confetti confusion I snatched my opportunity; I showed Marguerite a piece of gold and promised it if she would treat Jester to one of those all-around embraces of which she was past mistress. She looked askance at me, trying to read me, but the gold quickly seduced her. She snatched it from me and flew to Jester and smothered him. He splurged and spluttered. In a second they were the objective point of showering confetti and racy personalities.

"I dashed at Carnival. She dodged round a statue. I slipped around at the tail of her skirt. She broke across the gardens with a swing that pro-

claimed years of tennis and hockey. And the hussy laughed as she ran. I paced her, just far enough behind to keep her going, satisfied so long as she headed away from Jester. She entered a white street. I looked back to see if we were followed. Jester was coming for all he was worth, with light-o'-love Marguerite at his heels. I doubled after the scarlet skirt. But, by Jove, the little devil had me outpaced! We flashed round a villa, when she came to a sudden stop as a big white mansion loomed up ahead and blocked the street. I chuckled my triumph. But so had Jester got me trapped; I heard him cursing round the corner. I reached the girl in a bound. She, too, heard that cursing, and looked wildly for a hiding place. I caught her arm and drew her into the shadow of two pillared lions. Jester ran past, cursing horribly. Marguerite came close behind, and, by Jove, she clutched a vicious dagger! Say, but my heart thumped! Was the blade for me, or Carnival? Or had Jester too rudely repelled her? We had to get out of our alcove before they came back, searching the gateways. I spied out a narrow entrance to a walled banana grove. I caught her hand and we ran for it together. Inside she twisted herself free and escaped me. We played peek-a-boo around the shrubs. She had the pull on me, for my heavier weight sagged in the freshly plowed light loam; I had lost her for sure, but that she could not bottle her laughter. Round and round we went, she trying to entice me from the gate, I grimly heading her off. She gave up the gate and ran round by the low wall, looking for an exit. She came on a confounded pile of fruit crates heaped against the wall. In a flash she was up and over. I vaulted close behind.

"We were in a deserted street. I gloated, for down one side ran walled olive groves, and the other side was a solid flank of crumbling, high masonry broken only by a pair of wrought iron gates under a sort of lodge house. She ran to the gates, they offering the sole hope. The wretched things were ajar. She slipped through and clicked the

gates behind her just as I reached them. I rattled them, but they were self-locking. I let slip a wicked word, and her laugh came back tauntingly as she disappeared behind a cypress hedge. Then I heard her give a shocked 'Oh!'

"I jumped back and scanned the wall for scaling fissures. Over the gateway was a dilapidated stone balcony. Hand over hand, monkey fashion, I went up the gate grilling, got my fingers into the frieze of the balustrade, got a leg over and sprawled on the floor. I heard feet tripping through the house; someone was coming to the balcony. I dived for a clustering wistaria and crouched there, swallowing my breath. Rusty hinges scrooped and a door creaked. Carnival stepped out onto the balcony. She had come to taunt. She leaned there, my snared bird, her soft contour silhouetted against the moonlight, with one hand to her beating heart, the other clutching the balustrade for steady support. She had lost her scarf brooch; her white throat was open—I could see the larynx rising and falling to the half-choked laughter that gurgled from her parted lips . . . Three years of Sokoto's sun and niggers and burnt powder sands, and never a woman's soul or mischief in all that starved while! And there was she, adorable woman! And there was I, wholly brute man! And nowhere help at all!

"I slipped from the wistaria between her and the door. She turned, startled, and her eyes met my gloating triumph. The dare and mischief died out of them; she fell limply against the balustrade, staring at me frightened. She gasped at me: 'What do you want of me? Why do you vex me?'

"That was rich, after she had papered the chase the night long with her coquetting eyes and tempting laughter. I had no pity. She had me galled to the limit. I yelled, 'I want you!' and caught both her hands. She tugged at them rebelliously and tried the old dodge of feminine appeal to masculine protection. I suppose I'm a bit of a ruffian; all my life has been spent, one way or another, among the ruder men of the wilds. I would not free her.

Instead, I lied to her—I don't know why; some devil possessed me. I begged her compassion—told her I was *going out* to Sokoto—pictured three years of desperate chances with savages, fever, poison, treachery—threw my despairing soul into the brutal pictures and into my wail that I might never again see, hear, touch, gladden in woman. I know I was a cad—this morning I know it. But last night—Great Scott, man, I've seen phlegmatic miners hit 'Frisco from Dawson and throw gold pieces to manicurists just for the soft touch of woman, and sneak in to lady barbers for the third haircut in a day; and section hands blow into Los Angeles from the desert and throw their year's savings to a painted slut for a smile! That is all the excuse I can give. I am not phlegmatic, nor was she painted.

"When I finished she was limp compassion. I—ah, well, I stole my sweets from those twin threads of hot scarlet. But I was mad to see her face, the whole face. I put my hand to her mask, when she stayed me with a quiet, authoritative 'No.' Then I saw that her eyes were wet. That sobered me a whole lot, and I knew what I had done.

"She sobbed, 'Take me home.'

"I silently led the way through musty rooms. I would have given my life to undo the last five minutes. The tips of her fingers rested trustfully on my arm, cutting into my soul, and her feet seemed to beat time to 'Cad-cad-cad.' We came down into a *patio*. I picked up this brooch as we crossed it, the girl not noticing. From the *patio* we entered into a place of sepulchers. As we rounded the cypress hedge to the gate we heard steps approaching from the street. I drew the girl back into the shadow. Two picturesque ruffians in bandanas and wide cloaks slouched under the walls to the gate. One produced a key. It was time we made a move from where we were. We cautiously sneaked round the hedge and retreated behind a monolith. But the men came straight on to our hiding place and we had to dodge before them from figured Gabriel to tumbling vault

and sculptured cross until we came to the far end of the burial ground. It began to look serious for us, when I espied the big doors of a basalt mausoleum ajar. I whispered, 'In here, quick!'

"I cautiously closed the doors, but they scooped horribly; the steps came to a listening halt. I put my back to the doors and gripped my feet to the slab floor. The footsteps came on, but stepped off the path onto the grass just before they reached us.

"It was dank and black as an African jungle night in there. The girl hung to my sleeve, and I called up all my will to keep my arm from going about her. Suddenly her breath fanned my cheek and I found her whispering in my ear: 'There's something in here! Light a match, or I will shriek!'

"I drew a match across my arm. In the yellow splurge I saw a figure sitting on a stone bench, leaning against the marble finish of the walls, against which the young, white, tense face lay like a delicate cameo of some Southern beauty in sleep or death. An ample *mantilla* fell to the heavy folds of a black skirt, where the hands clasped with wonderful sculpturing of vein and almond nail and expression of grief. As we looked the shuttered eyes fluttered awake. Big, unseeing wells of pain looked through and beyond us into their own soul's misery. Then the face turned slowly toward us. By God, it was Grief!

"The match spluttered out. I struck another and lighted one of half a dozen candles arranged before a gilt, jeweled figure of the Virgin. Carnival picked off the floor a picture. Her face lit up with understanding and she gave it to me. It was the photograph of a pretty little baby boy. Carnival knelt at the young mother's feet, gently forced apart the strained fingers, took the chilled hands in her own warm clasp and kissed them, cooing the while. Then she got up and took the thin face in her palms, kissed the lips, her eyes streaming. I could not stand it any longer. I sneaked out and crawled on all fours round the mausoleum to spy out the land. I covered my head with

grass and peeped round the angle of the masonry.

"The ruffians were sitting astride a tomb, on which they had laid ready knives. They were choosing, turn and turn about, from a pile of jewelry loot. The night was almost as white as day; I could plainly see the chasing of bangles, the design and initials of watches and the diamond flash of rings. Ali Baba, what a haul! I was breathless with astonishment. I felt a tug at my leg. Carnival whispered: 'I've got her to crying. We could get her away.'

"'Has she a key?' I asked. She nodded. 'Then I will come when the men are gone.' And, oh, how my heart went out to my gracious Carnival!

"But the last article of the loot, a sunburst they had put aside as too valuable for any one share, furnished a tedious argument that gradually heightened to a quarrel. Suddenly the cathedral toscin sounded three solemn, sonorous alarms. The thieves snatched up their booty and knives and bounded for the far end of the cemetery, to hide the stuff, I suspected; for presently they tripped back over the graves and out the gate. At the click of the lock I ran back to the women and hurried them away.

"The young mother clung to Carnival like a child. Me she never noticed. So we went out of the cemetery and down the dust of the deserted road. We got into narrow, winding streets, where the confetti and dead flowers carpeted our tread like snow slush. Lights were appearing in windows and night-capped heads flung inquiries at us as we passed. Then again the cathedral tower sent forth three alarms over the sleeping town. Our lady of grief lifted her head sharply, and started forward at a half-run, dragging Carnival by the hand. We bumped into a little, bent, old man in the silver livery of some noble house. He seized on our charge.

"'Where have you been, lady? Don Pedro is distrait. The alarm has twice sounded. The soldiers are out,' he clamored, bowing low.

"I hung back. But the girl clung to

Carnival. So we all followed the old man's lead. As we went we picked up other silver liveries until we were a small army. Our guide led us straight to the big white mansion that had obstructed Carnival's flight earlier in the night. The place was ablaze with light. A stiff young ass came to the doorway through a lane of bowing servants. His eyes fell on the girl with keen displeasure—evidently she had done a very serious thing, from the Spanish perspective. Then his eyes traveled to me, and I conned the ceremony of dueling as I attempted explanations in Spanish. But I made no headway against the Don's suspicions; I guess I was rather a disreputable Pierrot, after climbing gates and balconies and crawling round cemeteries. Then a gray-haired dame appeared, and Carnival disentwined the clinging arms and softly gave the girl into her charge. The Don offered carriage and servants. I declined, and, bowing as elaborately as himself, backed away with Carnival.

"The girl was silent and preoccupied. I was extravagantly devotional—primed to heroics. Such revealed depths of womanly compassion—heart, soul, love! I shot glances at the neat little Grecian head and choked back the mad words. I dared not intrude on her thoughts. So we silently came to a terrace of bold fronts with grated areas. A plaintive mewing stayed Carnival to investigation. We traced the sounds to a barred cellar. Carnival knelt and called in girlish thrill, 'Kitty, Kitty.' A pair of shining eyes and a lost wail answered her. She turned her sweet face up to me in appeal.

"Perhaps it is starving, or perhaps it has kittens. Do go up and tell the people they have shut their cat in the cellar, please."

"Please." And those eyes again. And that woman in her. I'd have mounted the cathedral spire—column, façade, coppice, cornice and leads to the gilt cross—at her half-wish.

"I took the steps to the front door three at a time and pulled on the big bellknob and pealed an alarm to wake the dead. After a long while feet

shuffled across the hall and a hand slid back a shutter in the door. A black-browed and sullen face demanded why I disturbed their rest. I said there was a cat in the cellar. He said, 'The señor jests. Go away.' I assured him I was in earnest. 'What,' he screamed, 'you wake this house for a miserable cat! Begone, rascal, or I call the guard.' He slammed back the shutter.

"I ran down the steps, prepared to tear up gratings or remove bowlders or anything else she demanded. But she was not in sight. I searched doorways, but came to the end of the terrace without discovering her. Then I took sober stock of myself. Now I read her thoughtful silence; she had grown tired or frightened of the adventure and had neatly switched me off. Gad, but I was hot! I started for the hotel, frantic to overtake her. Just before I came to the barracks I saw the flash of her skirt ahead. I sprinted. At the guardhouse she seemed to stop a second to speak to the sentry. I came after like a shot. I could hear the panic in her gasping breaths; I was counting her mine—when a confounded guard nabbed me. I fought like the devil, but others came to his aid and into the guardhouse I went neck and crop. You bet I was hot! And that dainty, chuck-headed lieutenant put me through the catechism. The sentry said the lady had called for help, saying she was pursued by a man. The little jade! I couldn't make any argument whatever against that. I asked him to ring up the hotel and get verification as to my respectability and my claim to be a gentleman.

"Ring up?" he queried, whirling the ends of his mustache and chuckling over some joke.

"I simply couldn't find the Spanish word for 'phone,' so I indulged in sign language.

"Just so?" he smiled indulgently. 'We ring a bell; then we speak into a little hole, and lo, our friends hear us far away! The señor carries much wine.'

"I roared at him, but suddenly was sobered by the fear that I would be in

that blessed guardhouse when her boat sailed this morning. Getting a grip on myself, I detailed the night's events, telling him of the *cache* of the robbers, and subsequent events up to the cat-in-the-cellar episode. The idiot seemed to see something funny in that. But at last, in sheer weariness of my persistence, he consented to accompany me to the hotel.

"And here I am in the garden. And up there"—he threw his eyes aloft to the upper windows—"is *she* sleeping peacefully, without a care, a smile on her lips, her face in shuttered repose. But I'll get it back on her. She sha'n't escape me! I'll dodge those tripping heels through the Coliseum, St. Peter's, Constantinople, Jerusalem, Versailles, New York and all that's beyond, until she surrenders." He turned to the Englishman, but instead of the sympathy he expected, surprised there a broad grin. He grinned himself, a little sheepishly, and flung out: "I suppose I am a damned fool!"

"Well," the Englishman drawled, "I can furnish sidelights to your adventure that will certainly modify your enthusiasm."

Gurney caught his arm like a vise. "What do you know? Did you see her come home?"

"I rather think I did. And so did Jester. I was down here cooling off. There had been a burglary in the hotel that brought all the women to the corridors in tempting *déshabille*, Britannia in her gold and demure fright among them. There was no sleep for me after that. I slipped half a dozen smokes into my pocket and came down. Jester was stumping the gardens in a very unpleasant humor. His sentry patrol was from the fig tree to the road, which he scanned at every turn. Once he stopped in his turn at this end to snap out: 'That tall friend of yours, sir, is a scoundrel—a damned scoundrel!' I hold no brief for you, so I indulgently let his epithet pass. Presently he halted again to give me gratuitous advice on marriage and courtship. 'You're not married?' I admitted the indictment. 'Well, sir, if ever you contem-

plate taking trouble, go in for one of the old-fashioned courtships; maybe you'll discover in time whether your girl is looking for a husband or an eye-shut chaperon with a big purse.' He danced away again on the last word and his straining ears caught the sound of light running feet. He dashed out to the road and came back, dragging your Carnival by the wrist, gulping:

"Where have you been, madam? I'll not stand for it! I'll not stand for it!"

"She steadied herself a moment, gained her breath, twisted herself out of his grasp and dodged behind that Cupid, where she hurled at him: 'How dare you touch me after hugging that wicked woman?'"

"The attack staggered him. He threw up his hands in wild repulsion of it, spluttering: 'I—I—didn't. I—it was the girl—she—'"

"The girl caught him up with a scornful laugh of disbelief. I never saw such an attack—as confident as machine gun against arrow and spear. 'I saw you both locked in each other's arms,' she wrathfully declared. 'And a horrid man jumped at me. I ran into a garden and hid. And he stood in the gateway and I couldn't get away. I was awfully frightened. Oh, I've had such a night!' She leaned exhaustedly against the Cupid."

"His features showed amazement, incredulity, chagrin. Then he seemed to nerve himself against her. He went at her like a brawling coster. 'It won't go, madam. You deliberately ditched me. You were put up to this by your sister; you had not dared otherwise. At our next port the hussy goes home—home, do you hear!'"

"She straightened herself, and I could see by her face that it was coming to him."

"That is enough, sir. You and your ridiculous jealousy have made me the joke of the ship. And you dare to speak to me like this after what I saw this night! You shall never speak or come near me again.' She darted away for the hotel."

"He gasped after her, 'My God! My

God!' And had you seen his face you might have thought that perhaps there was something in his 'damned scoundrel' synopsis."

The American rose heavily to his feet. He looked up to the crowded roofs of Las Palmas, as if mentally tracing again its streets, and slowly and painfully enunciated: "I—don't—understand. There's some mistake; I'm sure there is some mistake. Had you seen her with that Spanish mother—But I won't think about it—there's some mistake."

The Englishman could not forbear taunting: "How—do—I—know—she's—American? How do I know a race horse from a hackney, a yacht from a barge, a gazelle from a hartebeest?"

Gurney flung back at him: "Well, give me my cake spiced, even if it pains me. You can't judge her; she is built on lines unappreciated by your English respectability. And you don't know what sort of Western provincialism and dressmakers' bills he enticed her from with his gold and vistas of the world. But you are wrong somewhere. I'll get this muck off me and be on hand to return this brooch; then we'll see."

"All right; I hope I am wrong, for your sake." The Major rose. "I'll come up and do a little sprucing myself."

The gardens were waking to excited chattering and gauzy skirts and cool flannels when Gurney returned. Someone hastened the excitement by announcing that the Blue Peter was flying from the American boat. A fleshy matron distressfully appealed: "What am I to do about my sunburst? I paid three hundred dollars for it in Denver."

Her escort, a clergyman with face turned toward the Holy Land, calmed her.

"The management promise to see the jewelry restored. They say the thieves are already caught. Your sunburst will be forwarded."

Gurney passed among the tourists, detouring to every skirt that swung above the shoe top, searching the faces as he fingered a filigree silver brooch. Suddenly he lifted his head to rich,

rolling "r's" coming from the direction of the tennis court. He made his way there hurriedly. As he reached the aloe hedge guarding it he heard the voice he thought he would know in a thousand exclaim: "Oh, I've forgotten my wrap! Run up to my room for it, George." He drew back just in time to miss the flying form of the Jester of his soul's abhorrence. He slipped into the court. The girl—the shape, head, eyes, hair seared into his heart—stood there, musing and leaning on her sunshade. There was no time for finesse; he had to accomplish much before the Jester returned. He confronted her determinedly.

"Excuse me, madam, but I think you dropped this." He offered her the brooch.

She refused it, looking him calmly in the eye.

"No, it is not mine; I never possessed one like that. What makes you think it belongs to me?"

"My mistake," he apologized drily. "But I certainly thought you dropped this in the cemetery last night."

"Cemetery?" She knitted her brows on him. "I was not in a cemetery last night. Indeed, I never left the hotel."

Her cool effrontery left him momentarily speechless. He recovered grimly.

"Madam is cheerfully forgetful."

Her eyes opened wide.

"Do—you—mean—to—say—you don't believe me?"

"I must believe a lady. It is my mistake. I no doubt dreamed of a mausoleum and a cat in a cellar," he sarcastically rejoined.

He was angry; he bitterly resented her brazen use of her femininity. He felt that she advantaged herself of his inexperience, and he suffered a sense of clodhopperly bungling.

She was quizzing him between narrow lids, in just the manner of overnight eyes.

"You certainly have been—" She broke off and an illuminating light swept her features.

At that moment a voice called through the gardens: "Clytie, Clytie, where are you?"

She called back: "Here—the tennis court, Rose."

She inclined her head to Gurney with a dismissing action. "My sister calls me."

But he had caught a lilt in the other voice that had raised a hundred hopes and throbbing reminiscences. Then he caught the personality in the tripping feet. He stayed his ground.

The girl broke through the aloes and came to a dead stop as her glance fell on him. His eyes swept the fingers of the four hands. The sister, Clytie, boasted a plain gold band among her rings; Rosie's fingers were innocent of meaning. At that a prolonged wail from the liner in the bay despaired him to decisive action. He advanced to Rose. The girl backed and weakly sought the support of her sister, whispering, "Stay, Clytie." But the Jester came running excitedly to the court.

"We've got to hurry!" His eyes fell on Gurney with a scowl of recognition. "Come along!" He caught Clytie by the arm. "The others are gone; we shall lose our boat."

Gurney sprang after Rose.

"Give me a moment—you *must* give me a moment. Look, here is your brooch!" He thrust it into her shaking fingers. "Let me come down to the wharf with you. I've got to explain," he frantically urged. "I'm going to join your party." They had fallen several steps behind the others. "I go first to London—"

She turned to him with an exclamation; but he anticipated her question.

"Ah, I lied. I am homeward bound. I was mad—it was you, you, you! Understand—*try* to understand. I am not really a cad, but— Oh, I can't explain like this, with that man bawling." Jester, fearful of losing his ship, had called up a pony cart and was urging Rose to hurry. Gurney pleaded desperately. "Let me see you—Rome, Greece, anywhere—give me a chance to explain!"

She twined and untwined her fingers nervously, looking away over the bay.

"I—don't—know," she said brokenly. "You have hurt me—you've hurt my feelings. I—I—" She wavered in the distress of conflicting emotions.

Clytie called from the cart: "Hurry, Rosie! You'll be left behind."

She turned her face and met his eyes in a brief instant; then she deliberately dropped the brooch in the road, and escaped to the trap.

He picked up the toy, raised his hat and stood watching the disappearing dust cloud. His reverie was interrupted by the Englishman.

"If you are going to make your boat, you'll have to be getting a move on." His eye fell on the brooch. "So you didn't find her?"

"Oh, yes. But I hadn't time to give her this. I'll return it to her when— Oh, let's get our boat. Gee, what a morning! Look at that sea!"



OH, MERCENARY WOMAN

HE (sadly)—I just met the poor chap you refused this morning.
She (coldly)—Well, it isn't my fault that he is poor, is it?



A ROLLING stone gathers no moss, but who wants to be a mossback?

LOVE'S FEET OF CLAY

By CLAIRE CHAPLINE

GRANGER, his head and shoulders propped against a boulder, stared moodily out at the dark waters that boomed sullenly below him, lashing uselessly the foot of the cliff, waves clutching at the impassive rock with fingers as lustful as those of a miser counting his gold, and, like his, falling away unsatisfied at the unyielding coldness vouchsafed the caress.

Above the noise of the sea was wafted to him, when ears were intent, the faint, sweet crying of the violins on the hotel veranda, with the deep-throated viol blending its masculine sensuousness with the wraithlike strains.

Though Granger's body was dulled by an unanalyzed stupefying sensation of hopeless loss, his brain was intensely active, and thought after thought, like Minerva's goddess self, sprang into life fully armed to do battle against him. For a while he fought them off, doggedly as desperate men fight, unreasoningly, and then surrendered weariedly, letting them sweep over him in triumph, stolidly enduring the lancelike thrusts of the mocking array.

A sudden swirling eddy of the breeze brought him the faint echo of laughter, feminine, silvery, from a group where gaiety reigned. He uttered a moan of pain and threw his arm over his head as if to prevent the sound from reaching his brain. But the flash of understanding had already seared its path; the laugh was unmistakably hers, Helen's, his wife's.

His wife! He uttered a short, grim sound. If only she *were* his wife! He had let her go easily—so easily. He had been reasoning it all out for the first time since that day when, her let-

ter in his hand, the dulling intelligence had come to him that she wished her freedom.

They had never made a pretense of being in love with each other. Their marriage had been a mating of minds alone—and each understood it so. It was all very natural. The courtship was brief, and, as he now looked back upon it, rather stately. Hating the whimsical attempts toward making life interesting characteristic of her set, the girl had been devoting herself to philanthropies and studies in sociology, and in pursuance of some pet charity or other had chanced upon one of his pensioners and they had met. All interests seemed held in common. It was, as all their friends proclaimed, an ideal match. He smiled bitterly. Yet within two short years, during which she had, in accordance with their agreement, gone in and out of their beautiful home as the presiding spirit of the household, not the wife of his soul and body, the blow had struck.

His thorough grasp of the law had enabled him to make it easy for her to gain her coveted freedom. With comfortless pride, he remembered that he had shown not even the little emotion that he had felt. It was a mind loneliness that compassed him afterward, a thing more easily covered from the eye of the gaping crowd than bodily hunger, and one which a deeper plunge into his books and work relieved. He thought that he had grown used to her absence. The vision of her coldly beautiful face came but seldom between him and the well thumbed pages of the huge volume before him, although when some bit written there struck his

fancy he would glance up quickly with a smile, forgetting . . . Occasionally, when he dined at some fashionable café, he would idly note the women who glided before him in softly colored groups, letting their eyes rest with aristocratic lids half closed in an almost insolent admiration of the rugged bigness of him. Then the thought would come to him that never among their number would Helen be found—and with the thought would come a half-sensed feeling of relief that her circle was small enough to avoid.

Until tonight he had not seen her, although he had pictured the meeting often: in some ill smelling part of town whither she had gone to discover for herself whether some tale of poverty were really true, or whether the recipient of some reckless gift of an emotional friend were truly worthy and in need.

Helen was always just. Always with sweet patience she sought out the needy and gave wisely, in puritanical care withholding from a possible need of the body that no over-benefaction might weaken the soul. He smiled a bit sardonically as he realized that she had used the same saintlike justice in measuring her benefactions to himself. Then the swift accusation of self swept over him that he had been coldly content with his dole, and that the wild, unreasoning hunger for her was a stranger to his breast before tonight, when for one brief instant he had seen her.

It had been so unlike the meeting that he had conceived. The seductively beautiful woman, whose coming divorce was the delicious whisper of the pleasure loving set to which she belonged, had suddenly summoned him up from New York, and a few hours before had drawn him to a cool, secluded corner of the veranda at the laughter-filled inn to talk over a phase of her case which had come to light. There it was, in that dimly lighted nook, that Helen, radiant with the joyousness of the rhythmic movement, had come upon them. Only the swift retreat of color from her face betrayed her surprise, and

the obvious tightening of her fingers upon her escort's arm as she murmured a word of apology for the intrusion. He acknowledged her recognition of him with impassive courtesy, but the thrill of anger at her involuntary appeal to another's protection flashed a fire into his veins that would not even now be quenched.

As soon as he could he led his beautiful companion back to the ballroom and himself sought the top of the cliff.

Only an incident—and then this—this hour long hunger that the ceaseless gnawing of the sea only made more intense. He moistened his lips—the salt spray was parching his throat—and turned his head with the restlessness of a thirsty dog. Suddenly every muscle grew tense and he started to rise. She was standing there before him looking down in perfect friendliness.

"You have discovered my own particular retreat and are usurping it," she said sweetly, "but I will forgive you, for you are a newcomer and did not know."

He wondered if her voice had grown richer and deeper, that it seemed to search out each nerve fiber of his body and thrill it into uneven vibration.

"No," he said—and the effort to control his voice made it seem to him strangely hard and cold—"I did not even know that you were here. I am going back tomorrow," he added stupidly in a tone of half-apology for he knew not what.

"Oh, I know," she answered with the ring of gay challenge in her tone. "All of us know that you came down to see the irresistible Mrs. Vandevere. You are to assist her counsel, I believe," with slow, insolent questioning of voice and eyes. Then with a shrug: "Well, surely she needs what is to be found in a 'multitude of counselors,' unless old sages have deceived us."

"My assistance is merely a matter of form," he answered rather briefly, with a swift glance at her. He had never remembered Helen's even commenting on a woman of Mrs. Vandevere's sort.

"Yet she needs you," she continued

musingly; "she needs a great many counselors. And they all go back—in the morning," she added deliberately, flecking an imaginary grain of sand from the gold film that framed the creamy loveliness of her bosom and fell away from the perfectly molded arms.

Granger received the cut of the lash in silence and stared at her as one stunned. Was this—could this be Helen?

Slowly his eyes swept her from head to foot. It was a strange Helen who was standing there in the soft gown of glittering black, which left the golden cloud that rose and fell with her breathing to cling closely to the low curve of the hips and fall slenderly about her feet. The brilliant jetted disks, lightly coquetting with the moonlight which glanced upon them, only accentuated the exquisite perfection of her, revealing by their fitful flashings some delicate molding before only taken as part of a perfect harmony of form. Her face was in shadow, but the mass of rippling coppery hair crowned her shapely little head with much less precision than he remembered it. Had those little tendrils which nestled so lovingly against the pure curve of her cheek always been there?

Her gay laugh startled him out of his intense scrutiny. He dully fancied that he had never heard Helen laugh with that depth of real humor before.

"Well," she quizzed whimsically, yet with an undertone of anxiety that he heard despite her smiling, "what do you think of me?"

His reply came slowly. "I don't know," he answered coldly. "I think that I don't know you."

"You never have known me," she said with impetuous bitterness. "You never have cared to know me. I always tried to be what you thought you knew."

"I wonder," he said slowly, raising his eyes to hers—"I wonder if that is true, Helen?"

But she had recovered her self-control and had returned to her laughing tone.

"You aren't as polite as I am," she

fancifully complained. "I haven't intimated that I wished my retreat to myself—and yet you won't even ask me to sit down and share it with you. Is that kind?"

"I—I beg your pardon," he said, flushing guiltily as a boy and springing to his feet. "Of course—you came here to be alone. Or is someone coming?" he added with a jealousy that surprised him more than her. "I will go back to the hotel."

Deep-throated laughter greeted this remark.

"Don't be absurd, Paul," she teased, letting herself sink into the sand which the weight of his big-limbed body had hollowed into comfort. "There is no need of your going—unless," as a sudden thought came to her, "Mrs. Vandevere is waiting!"

She stretched her long body into greater comfort and clasped her slim hands behind her head, looking up at him with *insouciant* impudence.

He turned fiercely upon her, an angry fire smoldering in his eyes.

"That insinuation—the first time I ignored it—coming from you absolutely maddens me, Helen."

She returned his look with a cool daring that never faltered.

"The possibility of its truth," she replied deliberately, "maddens me."

He threw himself down beside her and caught her shoulders in his strong hands. "What do you mean?" he asked, with a quiet power that might have frightened her.

With an amused laugh that weakened his grasp she shrugged herself free.

"I mean," she observed casually, "that I have sand in my slippers, and that is enough to madden anyone. Now if you will be quiet and good, I may let you assist me in putting my slipper on again after I have emptied it. It is somewhat hard when one's foot is moist from much dancing and one's shoe horn is with one's maid," she said quaintly.

Rather sullenly he let himself sink beside her, and resting his head on his hand, watched operations in silence, conscious only that her musical voice

was trailing into absurdities intent on keeping to the froth of things.

"There," she was saying now, puckering her forehead into a tiny frown, "no wonder it hurt my heel—just see the huge pebble that has been pressing into it!"

She leaned toward him, and he found himself stupidly holding in his big hand the tiny satin thing with which her foot had been shod—his forefinger being ignominiously directed by her cool clasp upon a pebble of minute proportions.

"There," she said—and as she bent nearer a wisp of her hair swept his cheek and the violet fragrance of her went to his head like wine—"it might have cut me and given me blood poison or something, mightn't it? But I found out in time that it was hurting me, that I couldn't stand it any longer, so I'm throwing it away. I think it is wise to do that always—don't you? Before it really hurts too badly to endure?"

He felt the undercurrent of her meaning carrying him helpless to a wider, deeper understanding of her—and with it a comprehension of the shallows in which he had floated serene. He lifted his eyes to hers, and the hunger in them made her swiftly retreat.

"I wonder," she went on, her eyes fixed on her silken foot, "I wonder—if—after all—it cut through and has hurt me before I realized . . ."

The swift defensive movement of her mind and body seemed to change him into a different being. With her un-sureness came his strength. He dimly remembered feeling the same cool excitement and surge of power when as a boy he had gambled for the first and last time at cards. The vision of himself, haggard and disillusioned, staggering away from the table at dawn flashed upon him, too—but the fire was in his veins now; mere visions could not quench it.

He stretched his arm lazily along the sand and clasped his hand around the slim silken instep. "I'll find out how much it hurt you—before you realized," he said with an intensity that his light tone failed to hide.

The hot color flamed into her cheeks, and he laughed mockingly at her futile attempts to withdraw her foot.

"Paul," she stormed softly, "let me go. You must."

"Unhand me, villain," he laughed back at her teasingly. Then, deliberately leaning his head against her knee, with his free hand he raised aloft the absurdly small slipper he held and inspected it.

"I don't remember, Helen," he said critically, turning it upside down and squinting thoughtfully at the heel, "ever seeing you shod in such a perfect absurdity before. It seems to me that your boots were always of the common sense variety. Do you mean to say that you can walk in those heels?"

She stared at the back of his tawny head in silence.

"My impertinence deserves no answer," he observed in a confidential tone to the slipper. "Very well, since I am not a sufficiently brilliant conversationalist to keep this up indefinitely, I'll put you where you belong, and then perchance my lady will vouchsafe at least a 'Thank you, kind sir,' to cheer us up."

With a quick indrawing of the breath the woman steeled herself to control the quiver of her body, that it might not reveal to him the curious new power that was his, gained in the indefinable change in the man she thought she knew.

The big, rugged frame, that housed a personality as cool and unyielding as adamant, a mind whose sane judgment, touched with the saving grace of humor, was the watchword of those of his profession, seemed suddenly charged with the life and fire of a magnetic battery, and like it, possessing the deadly fascination of danger if urged beyond one's power to control.

She dimly realized that he had removed the other slipper and was pouring out its contents of sand.

"Helen," he was saying in a tone of authority that crept about her struggling heart with a delicious sense of rest and comfort, "you are not to wear these ridiculous little satin things down

here again. You might turn your ankle and have the exquisite pleasure of staying down here all night. Poor little ankle!" He laid caressing fingers upon the silken curve above the dainty arch of her instep.

"Isn't that," with a breathless little laugh, "what I am having the exquisite pleasure of doing now? It was very late when I came." But somehow the words, "exquisite pleasure," had a thrill of truth that she hastened to cover with an attempt at an ordinary tone: "I am glad that I am not staying at the hotel. My cottage is apart, and people don't—don't— There, I think you have put my slipper on quite thoroughly, thank you."

With a little sigh he released her, and clasping both hands back of his head, he threw himself prone at her side and lay there staring moodily at the stars.

That was an expression which she remembered, and an unreasoning disappointment swept over her. That man who lay there was the man she knew—not looking at her, not touching even the edge of her filmy draperies. A cloud floated over the moon and seemed to bring with it a breath of cold. She shivered slightly. He turned his head quickly.

"Cold?" he queried briefly, in a matter of fact tone.

"A little," she confessed, "but it doesn't matter. I'm going back now." She put her hand on the sand to push herself upward, but he laid his own upon it.

"No," he said, "you are not going back. You are going to stay right where you are, and you are going to put my coat around you. That's the beauty of flannels," he went on prosaically, slipping an arm out of the sleeve; "they are soft and just warm enough. Now, see—isn't that fine?" He was on one knee beside her and was adjusting the garment as he spoke. As she yielded her shoulders to the soft protection, his quick eye caught a tiny thread of blood upon the smooth whiteness of the flesh.

"Helen," he exclaimed, "you have hurt yourself!"

His arm slipped about her and he bent his head to look more closely. Her breath came quickly, but she did not draw away.

"It is nothing," she said with a little catch in her voice. "The little jeweled clasp which holds the tulle in place has an unruly fastening. It came loose while I was dancing and scratched it a bit, I fancy. Don't bother. It is all right now. Mr. Falconer proved himself a most able jeweler's apprentice."

A quick mental vision of the handsome, debonair head of young Falconer bent over the white shoulder sent the blood flooding to Granger's temples.

"Falconer is quite an adept at many things—at love-making, for instance," he observed coldly, perfectly conscious that he was behaving like a spoiled, lovesick boy.

Helen laughed lightly and in genuine amusement, looking daringly into the sullen eyes bent so closely above her.

"Perhaps," she observed with a glance provokingly half-lidded, "it might be well then for others who are less adept, although somewhat having the advantage in point of years, to become pupils of his—if they wish to marry again. Mrs. Vandevere is quite a connoisseur, I am led to believe."

The encircling arm crushed her to him with sudden passion, forcing the head of rippling bronze back upon his broad shoulder. She felt the sweep of the tawny hair against the curve of her cheek as his lips were laid upon the tiny wound on her shoulder. She pressed her slim white hand quickly upon the mass of golden tulle upon her breast, as if to still the tumultuous throbbing beneath, and his own firm fingers took it prisoner.

In delirious content she felt the sweet fire follow his lips along the curve of her throat, mounting upward to her cheek. A little moan, a faint restlessness of struggle, and she lay still, captive, bound by the strongest fetters forged by the gods—the fetters which she had scorned and denied and derided during the years of her books and her philanthropies and her platonically wedded existence.

The man—that intellectual giant whose mind swayed men as easily as wind moves the leaves, his control of others surpassed only by his ruling of himself, whose indulgent smiles had mocked the thralldom of others—felt her slim body yield to his arms, and the blood leaped and rioted through his veins. The pulse of his throat pounded fiercely under the maddening touch of her rippling hair, and the soft heaving of the breast beneath the clasped hands which crushed the golden tulle thrilled to vibration every nerve fiber like the touch of a master upon the strings of a sensitive instrument.

"My wife," he murmured, "mine—mine—"

She turned her head so that the lips he was slowly seeking were taken away. With a quick movement she laid the back of her hand against the firm line of his mouth.

"Don't—don't kiss me! Not my lips—I can't bear it!" she warned breathlessly.

A half-laugh was in his throat—tantalizing, triumphant, and at the sound she drew away her hand and laughed unsurely in sympathy.

"Of course you wouldn't, anyway," she said, with a childish quaintness that he remembered wondering over many a time. Now he understood the outward symbol of a child soul unawakened.

"No," he mocked, lifting her away from him and looking down at her exultingly. "Of course I shouldn't, anyway—but it's only because I know that you can't get away that I'm humoring you for the fraction of a while. I'm willing to be unselfish temporarily. Unselfishness as a constant attitude of mind is injurious to the spiritual progress of one's fellow men," he added banteringly.

She laughed faintly and unsteadily. It was as if the sudden relaxation of the tenseness of her nerves had made her uncertain of their response to her mood.

"When I was a boy, Helen," he went on conversationally—"Now, don't try to raise your head. It's perfectly

comfortable where it is, isn't it? There!—when I was a boy, my mother used to make jam tarts occasionally. They were the most luscious ticklers of the palate ever concocted, I know. I could always steal one without a chance of its being missed—just one, no more—my delight for the day. Then I was off for some quiet nook, and how I would force myself into self-restraint—knowing full well that, being mine by right of theft, I could devour it when I chose! Did you gobble up your jam tart right at once, Helen mine, that you are so suspicious?"

She smiled in dreamy content and moved her head until her cheek rested against his, bent over her.

"I was never allowed to have any jam tarts," she said, with a babyish puckering of her lips—a trick that had almost annoyed him once. It had seemed so out of place in a woman of Helen's mature mind. Now he realized it belonged to the self he had never known, and it made him strangely tender. With exquisite gentleness he circled his fingers lightly about her throat, turning the moonlit face up to his.

"Dearest," he whispered softly, "it is that rigorous self-starving that has all but lost you your birthright. 'Don't you know, he added whimsically, "that, enclosed in these fleshly trappings as we are, we cannot scoff and sneer and try to live above—jam tarts? They are part of our deepest life."

"That is sheer madness, Paul," she murmured, turning away the face into which the color had flamed. "You—you don't understand. You are not reasoning like yourself. I—I think I hate you. Let me go—please—please—"

"Why should I?" with a touch of roughness. "I am your husband."

There was a tinge of the primeval—and she tried to think it offended her.

"No, you *were*—not *are*. I don't mean it simply from a legal point of view, either, Paul. It was part of our agreement, you know. If either found the bond irksome—if it made us less to our fellow men"—she faltered a bit

over the words that used to come so readily—"or if either found a truer mate—it was to be severed. So I am free—free," she repeated, with a slight vehemence as if to convince herself. "Free to do as I choose."

"What do you choose?" he asked almost stolidly.

She paused a moment and gave him a covert glance. "Marry Mr. Falconer," she replied coolly, slipping from his loose clasp and leaning back lazily against the cliff.

The man drew a quick breath.

"Falconer!" he ejaculated. "That ass! I beg your pardon, Helen, but you must be mad. He can't begin to appreciate you. He could never fathom that wonderful mind of yours in a thousand years. You would draw into your shell and would be more of an enigma to him than you were to me—and God knows that I realize now that I never knew you. Falconer!" His head dropped upon his hands. There was a silence for an instant, and then, lifting dull eyes, and looking at her from beneath the hair rumbled by his nervous interlaced fingers, he demanded simply, "Why?"

For a moment she gazed ahead of her out at the sea. Then her puckering frown relaxed and a laugh of pure amusement rose to her lips.

"I'm not sure," she replied honestly, "but I almost think—yes, I quite think it is because he considers me—so—beautiful. I have been beautiful since I knew that, and—I am glad. You say that I am different, you know," she went on quaintly. "I am. He made me so. I think I like myself better this way. In all the time that I knew you, you never changed me. I was always the same—what you thought that I was. You say that he cannot appreciate my 'wonderful mind.' Perhaps," slowly, "that is why I like him. It is different. I've had my 'wonderful mind' appreciated ever since, at the age of eight, I could recite correctly a hundred lines of Virgil. My mind is probably a very good mind, but it has been sicklied o'er with the pale cast of flattery ever since I can remember, and

now"—she laughed deeply at her own absurdity—"I find that I have gold bronze hair, which is delightful if released in little tendrils—here"—and she touched her temples with a gesture half of mocking, half of coquetry—"and wonderful shoulders and arms and a lissome form which black, soft, clingy stuff like this sets off to perfection, and— But, as I said, I am quite sure that is why I am to marry Mr. Falconer—soon," and there was a hint of self-mockery in the charming candor of her manner.

"You have told him?" he demanded huskily.

"Yes, that is—almost told him. He understands. I wished not to marry—at once."

"I see," he said roughly. "You wished a decent time to elapse, so that the funeral baked meats might be cooled to the proper temperature for the marriage table. I understand."

"Strange that I never before noticed that you were almost coarse at times, Paul," she murmured, letting the sand sift through her slim fingers idly. "I can't seem to recall that in you at all. One of your chief charms to me was your peculiar refinement. You were always so calm—and absolutely fair, too."

He laughed shortly. "Helen, the thing that strikes me about our marriage—about the marriage of most in these days—is the firmness with which the mask has been adjusted. It never slips. We are so overmodest that we never lay bare our real selves. The dread of my life with you was that some day I should cause that scornful curl to come to your lip—I have seen it when others thoughtlessly brought the un-beautiful within your vision. On account of your theory that there is no use in ugliness, you had me modeling over—awkwardly retouching—the work that a Creator and his apprentice, Time, had wrought."

"But our life together was beautiful. It was all refinement and—coolness," she said dreamily. "Yet it almost smothered me. There was something—here"—she touched her breast—"that was so useless."

"No, Helen—it was unbeautiful. It was one of those veneerings of a beautiful truth. It was scarcely a half-truth."

She turned away her head and said nothing.

"But—dear one—"

"Yes?" just a breath of a word.

"Falconer will be only a half-truth, too—the other half. There will be, too, a self that Falconer does not know."

The sand slipped through her fingers quickly, but she said nothing.

"Do you care for Falconer?" he asked slowly and steadily.

"I—I don't know," she faltered with a catch in her breath. "I thought I did. It was new and strange. I'm not sure. He is—sure—for me, though," she added with a hysterical, sobbing laugh.

"I'm sorry, then, that I called him"—he paused contritely—"implied that he wasn't an awfully clever fellow, Helen. He is a mighty bright young business man—making money hand over fist, I hear, since he came to New York. He comes from a good family, too, out in Wisconsin. I—I beg your pardon. You probably have all the facts. It is a trick of my profession, I suppose. Yes, I've heard of Falconer and nothing but what was clean and honorable. He's—all right."

"Thank you, murmured the woman inscrutably.

"He's handsome, too," the man went on unobserving, "an Adonis, as men go. Just the kind of a man that women love. We odd masses of bumps and corners stand little chance with women against a man like Falconer."

She glanced covertly at the rugged body and strong profile outlined in the moonlight, and a smile curved her lips. Then she rose quietly and stood looking down at him. He caught her hand and pressed it against his cheek as it hung half limply against the clinging black.

"Helen," he pleaded, "come back and let's try it again. I loved you more than I dreamed. You don't know how I've missed that inspiration of your enthusiastic mind. Law has

become a drudgery. And without the glimpse into the cool, clear depths of your pure soul—I—I've lost all my religion, dear. I'm quite sure," with a delicious whimsy, "that if my habits had not been so firmly established from early manhood, I'd have 'gone to the dogs' months ago."

She smiled a little and smoothed the hair back from his forehead with the tenderness of a mother.

"No, Paul," she said firmly. "We have tried it once and it failed. Nothing is different. This is only a mood. It will pass and all will be the same. I don't know what it was—that smothering self of me—but it was true. I felt as if I had been locked up in a windowless room and you—you could not find me—somehow. No—no!"

Involuntarily she put her hand up to her throat and the moon passing from under the cloud touched her lovingly with its glory.

"Come, Paul," she said quietly. "Take me home. It is late—very late."

The man sprang to his feet and stood facing her. His jaws were set and the pulse in his throat beat painfully. With a half-frightened gesture she put her hand up as if to keep him at bay. There was a sound in his throat at the futile gesture—half laughter, yet it flashed into her mind the vision of some baffled forest denizen whose right has been threatened.

Slowly his eyes moved over her: the soft tendrils of hair at her temples escaping from the gleaming crown above the pure curve of the cheek, and the white of throat and bosom framed in the golden film, and the lissome young body outlined by the gleaming black of the gown that fell slenderly about her feet. Then she smiled and the statue flashed into life—the one woman in the world.

The blood flamed to his temples. He seized her in his arms and crushed her slender form to him until the wild beating of his heart seemed to quicken hers. With ungentle hand he forced her to meet the gaze of the eyes bent over her.

"By God," he said in a voice that she had never heard, low and rough with passion, "Falconer shall not have you! You are mine—mine by every right of God and man! My mind and my soul have starved for you for months, and my body has starved for you always—always—and I never knew! I don't care whether you love me or not. I love you. Falconer—pah! You are not your own to give; you are mine. So," holding her off with a grim laugh, "Falconer told you that you had gold bronze hair, did he? You have. It's glorious hair. Mine—mine to tangle my fingers in—like this! And Falconer said that you had wonderful shoulders and arms! True—wonderful they are, but they are mine—to curve about my neck—so—to rest my lips upon—did I burn you? And the black gown that—yes, that is true, too. You shall never wear that gown again. No other man shall say that—Damn Falconer! What right had he to look at you—mine as you are—every beautiful inch of your body, every wonderful thought of your soul—mine, mine!"

"Let me go," she panted. "It's heathenish."

He gave a short, exultant laugh. "Heathenish? Of course it's heathenish. Everything human dates back to heathen times. When we reckon without the heathen that made us, we lose—every time. Let you go? Never! Once I forgot that you were a heathen and had no rights, and I let you go. Listen: there is a train that leaves for New York in an hour. It is morning now—and you are going back with me. You can have any kind of a ceremony you wish that can be consummated in half an hour then. No, don't move. You will have plenty of time. Tell me—once—that you love me and I will let you go. Lie to me, if it's a lie, but say it, 'I love you.'"

"No, no," she whispered breathlessly. "It isn't love—it can't be. It's too big for anything as human as love. It's life! O Wonderful Dear," she murmured, softly framing his head in her arms and drawing it downward, "how did you know that I was a heathen—born not to be free, but to be a slave? Take me—for always, my king of men," and like a thirsty child she drank love from his lips.

And the little gods that men say are dead laughed in glee.



THE NEW SPELLING

"SPELL 'Innocence,'" the teacher said.

"I-G-N-O-R-A-N-C-E," spelled the boy.

"Correct," the teacher answered. "For we are told that sin came into the world through knowledge."



BLESSED are the meek, for when the last trump sounds a great many people will find that their heads are too large to fit into an aureole.

MISUNDERSTANDING

By MARY LUCKE CHALLIS

“**S**O she is called ‘La Dame de Bronze,’ eh? It is not exactly a pretty title, nor does it describe her curiously lovely coloring—hair more dark copper than bronze; golden brown eyes; a white skin, with a warm, golden tinge of imperceptible freckles, and a soft color like a peach.”

“Certainly it is such as one sees once in a century, perhaps. Brunette enough to make her seem dark and true and tender. I detest the red and golden types which approximate to white eyelashes, fire and deceit.”

“Hush, she will hear you! She has done so already—but you are right. She is what is called a superb scheme of color, and, by Jove, she has violet eyes! What were you thinking of to call them brown?”

The second voice was merely a guttural whisper which carried no further than the other side of a table for two on the terrace of the Parc Hotel at Homburg. But the first had a clear penetration in its by no means raised tones that traveled far, and a slight blush mounted to the loose waves of hair under the wide brim of Neva Neville's Panama hat.

She had heard. Her wonderful eyes, which seemed as if they held a shadow as of autumn leaves in their violet depths, and were bewildering enough to excuse mistakes as to their color, grew darker with suppressed annoyance.

With a quick, deliberate grace, which yet gave the impression of unconsciousness, she rose from her seat among the rose trees below the terrace and walked through the garden to the gate, lingering there impatiently. A study in bronze, truly. Shot shadows of its every shade

and gold, an inexplicable combination impossible of definition to the masculine mind, made her something worth looking at both from a woman's and an artist's point of view.

The latter, if color mad, would have thoroughly appreciated the value of the subtle touches of tea rose pink which in some indescribable fashion accentuated her own beauty, and that of her clothes. She was individual and distinctive from head to foot, refined as only a thoroughbred woman can be.

Greville Wynyard's sunburnt, good-looking face grew slightly lengthy and a little deeper in tint. Brunton laughed low and derisively.

“Spoiled your chances, perhaps, if you want to know her. Hello, here's Penniston! He's likely to tell us who your divinity is; he knows everyone.”

A tall, languid man came slowly through the *salon* and joined them on the terrace. Assailed by questions and compunctious explanations, he looked a little puzzled. Enlightened at length, he responded:

“Oh, that's a great friend of my wife's and a very old one of mine. Staying with us. Yes, came here some weeks ago. Feel better decidedly, but not up to par yet—beastly climate of India, then influenza, and you see the result.”

Wynyard scanned the large-featured, handsome face that was so pale and worn, and noticed the unusually thin, white, veiny hands.

Old Bob Penniston was not looking at all fit, and a pang of pity shot through Greville's mind as he realized that the pretty, fashionable little wife was quite blind to the fact. She had

fluttered out of the window, and, buttoning her gloves, was talking brightly and lightly, turning her head from side to side as if in search of somebody.

"There she is! Neva!" She swirled her wide skirts in a rush down the steps and across the garden.

"Come and be introduced," Penniston said, rousing himself out of a chair into which he had sunk and taking Wynyard's arm.

It was no use refusing, so Greville Wynyard, putting as good a face as he possibly could on the matter, went down to the promenade to meet Mrs. Penniston and "La Dame de Bronze."

"Mrs. Neville, let me introduce—"

Wynyard started and lost the rest. "Mrs. Neville"—so she was married! His manner, always irreproachable, was very charming now by reason of its frank, apologetic embarrassment, and Neva Neville in her heart forgave him on the spot, but she iced her tiny bow to the limit of bare civility, though she could not prevent the warm blood stealing into her softly colored face as she faced him.

Then they all passed up the promenade toward the Kurgarten, and, whether by accident or design, he and she walked there together.

"I saw you watching Mr. Penniston," she said at once, and Greville felt instinctively that she had decided to ignore his unluckily outspoken opinions, and he admired her for it.

A strange sense of *bien-être* stole over him as he looked down at her. He straightway forgot his temporary awkwardness of feeling. Her manner was perfect, and her voice matched it. He wondered idly if the soul within was as lovely as its casquet.

"Yes," he answered gratefully. "He is looking very ill, so slow and weak, and he used to be as brisk and energetic as a gray squirrel—in spite of his size." He was delighted to meet the quick smile that mocked his inapt simile. "No, it isn't quite old Bob's style," he admitted, "but it's all I could think of at the moment."

"He is a very sick man," Mrs. Neville said, and betrayed her nationality

thereby. "His poor little wife does not realize it, and I dare not tell her."

"Let her alone," Wynyard said. "Time enough to face the worst when it can't be put aside any longer. I'd rather live in a fool's paradise than in none at all. She will have all these weeks to the good if—"

Neva Neville looked at him very keenly and very sadly; a shadow of suffering seemed to pass across her face.

"I don't agree with you. I would rather know the worst, and if it could be borne it would make the present doubly perfect."

There seemed to be a deeper tone in her voice, and Wynyard said to himself: "That is a rarely sympathetic woman."

They were together most of the evening, and he walked back with her through the quiet streets to the Parc, listening to the sound of her silken skirts and her firm, light tread with a distinct pleasure.

"She is a beautiful woman, isn't she?" Penniston said as the two men stood alone in the hall saying good night and lighting cigarettes. "And she is as good—in spite—" His foot seemed to slip in the paved surface, and Wynyard caught him.

It was the beginning of the end. He was very ill for weeks after that evening, and Greville helped to nurse him, meeting Neva Neville every day, and all day long.

One afternoon he came into the darkened room and looked at Penniston with a light in his eyes that made the poor fellow lying on his couch shut his own with a groan. This man was going full of vigorous life to meet his fate, and he was losing his hold on the painful existence to which he still so frantically clung.

"Have you asked her yet, Greville?" he said laborably. He read the meaning of the absorbed, yet restless expression, and he clinched his hands quietly in his isolated despair.

"No, but I shall."

"Do," Penniston said. "I tell you she is a rare woman. I could love and marry her tomorrow—if—not married—and did not love my wife—and I were

not dying. Never heed—you know I told you—" His voice and speech grew very confused. Then his face, with its heavy, worn features, was distorted with pain, and only when he had quite lost his hold on life and his wife's helpless hands was there peace upon it again, as Wynyard laid him gently back upon his couch and guided the weeping women through the darkness that had crept in upon them.

II

SHE was no longer "La Dame de Bronze," but a slender, black silhouette against the light.

Her face was pale and strained, and there were blue, bruised lines under her eyes. Wynyard had seen her patience, her tact, her sympathy; seen her self-sacrifice and unfailing sweet temper throughout the trying weeks of Ella Penniston's hysterical sorrow, and his love had grown to fever heat. He could wait no longer, and he told her so, in a sudden, irrepressible burst of feeling.

"Do not say that we must wait! If you only love me! You are doubly alone now. Penniston told me everything—that you had been so unhappy. Come to me—now—at once, Neva! Mrs. Penniston is with her people, and you can leave her since they are here."

Neva's head sank on her hands.

She was sitting by a table on the terrace, and they were practically alone for the moment in the twilight. Wynyard stood beside her, one hand grasping the back of her chair.

"Yes, I asked him to tell you," she said at last. Her voice was very low, and something in it seemed to touch all his nerves—there was such hopeless pain in it.

"Don't!" he said passionately in a hoarse whisper, putting out his hand and clasping hers. "Forget everything except that we love each other, and marry me at once."

Her face as she looked up at him was transfigured. She rose to her feet and they turned, leaning over the railing of

the terrace, the scent of the roses sweeping past them on a soft night breeze.

"Do you really mean—" She was shaken by some strong emotion. She stretched out her hands toward him, then drew them back again. Wynyard only saw the glory of her eyes and his own burned.

"Yes! Will you come?" He pleaded and urged. He was masterful in his passionate eagerness, and her indecision only made him the more wildly determined to win her.

At last for a long instant she seemed to look into his very soul. Then the color faded from her face and—as one spent after a sore fight against overwhelming odds—white as death, but with such love as he had never dreamed of shining in her eyes, she put her hands into his and held her face up to meet his lips.

"You shall never regret it," he said, and his eyes dwelt on hers with a passionate gaze.

He thought that he loved her soul, her clear judgment, her noble mind, but her great and singular beauty held him like a spell; it intoxicated him. And she thought so little of it—a fact which only enhanced its value and her own.

III

FIVE years of nearly absolute happiness.

It is much to win, something to make one hold one's breath with awe, and almost fear; there is so little, so very little of it in the world.

It was not altogether cloudless. That condition of life's atmosphere scarcely tests the love that constitutes its serenity. No, there had been minor evils and worries. Loss of money first of all—enough to change their careless lives into an almost painful existence for a time; but Neva's temper and tact were so sunny, so unfailing, that she seemed to find nothing a burden and to cause Greville Wynyard to think that love and true comradeship could lighten every shadow, make smooth every rough way down which they trod to-

gether. Year by year, instead of lessening, his passion and admiration had but grown stronger. It seemed as eternal as his wife's loveliness, which nothing dimmed, yet she was no longer very young.

Sometimes she would say to him half wistfully:

"I shudder to think what you would do if I lost my beauty, Greville, for you love it so intensely, more than the 'me' behind it. And that hurts me. I am surely worth more to you than only my face."

"No, I don't, my queen. It is because the two are equally flawless that I love them both; but your face and figure are so perfect, and I can see them—"

"But, Greville, cannot you 'see' the soul, too?" Her voice was almost a cry in its appeal.

She was standing looking down at him as he sat at his writing table. Her face was exquisite in coloring, features and expression—the latter almost divine in its pathos. There was always the potential sadness in it that makes the mouth and eyes so tender, so deep, and that had once been very great. Now it was only a latent possibility.

"I can see that you are the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual self which is more lovely than I dreamed a woman could ever be." He wound his arms around her and laid his head on her breast, his face upturned to hers and alight with worship.

She held it against her with a gesture that was almost like a mother's intense fondness. Then, "Let me go, darling," she said, and drew herself away.

She was very pale, but Greville was not observant, and one secret of her great fascination for him was a certain aloofness, though she was passionate enough in her feeling for him to satisfy even his exacting nature. Still, she always made him sensible of the fact that she craved more for his recognition of her "soul self" than of its outward shape and substance.

His eyes followed her, and then as she left the room fell on her picture, that was almost lifelike.

"She is a woman in ten thousand," he said under his breath.

A year later they were at Homburg again. He had taken her there for the change she so sorely needed.

Their only child had been born six months before, only living a few weeks and then dying, killed by the carelessness of its nurse.

Neva Wynyard's self-control was marvelous. She hid her own suffering to spare her husband, whose grief was very great and his anger dangerous. But the strain told upon her, and Greville took her away from London in a panic of love and fear.

They stayed at the Parc for old association's sake, and as they sat on the terrace looking across the roses to the sunlit trees beyond, and watched the multicolored crowds moving up and down the promenade and through the gardens, something of the old luster and color seemed to return to her eyes and face. She had soon realized that she must wear them again, if she possibly could, to hold him to his somewhat straitened life with anything like content. Wynyard, watching her, grew half wild with the intoxication of the change, and she, laughing against her will, bade him hide his admiration. They sat on and on until they were nearly the only people left in the twilight. Then they rose.

"I will go in and get Grey to come and smoke," he said.

"Please do."

She went down the steps into the garden and sat at the table where she had overheard his first comments on her great loveliness.

In a dream, that grew deeper and deeper, she did not heed his lengthened absence until a tiny breeze made her shiver a little. Then gathering her train into her hand she went slowly through the *salon* and into the hall.

"Someone else must have met Greville and kept him, for Mr. Grey would have come out into the garden with him," she thought. She smiled as she realized that it was almost the first time he had ever made her wait for him.

Not finding him there, she went upstairs to their sitting room, entered, and stood just inside the door, trying to pierce the dusk that half concealed its much furnished length.

She called him softly: "Greville!" but the room was tenantless. Seized with a sudden idea she turned away, her eyes alight and her face softly burning.

A little while later she stood in front of her cheval glass, gazing at her own reflection. She was once more "La Dame de Bronze," wearing the colors which her husband loved and which she had always been seen in since her marriage until her baby's death.

She stood still, pinning on a cluster of roses that carried out the bronze and half-hidden pink of her toilet, then, with an indescribable grace and shyness, blushing hotly as she did so, she leaned forward and kissed the face reflected in the great mirror. "He loves it so," she whispered to herself, as if in excuse.

With cheeks still warm in the sudden flush of her lovely vanity, she went back into the sitting room. Wynyard was there alone. He turned round on her as she came up to him, and his face—even in the faint light from the lamps in the garden—seemed changed, but she did not see it.

She waited for him to notice what she had done—given up her mourning to surprise and delight him, standing with eyes cast down and radiant with her beauty.

For a long, long moment he looked at her, his face drawn and altered.

"Do you know what I have heard?" he said at last. "I overheard two strangers discussing freely."

His voice was rough and strained. It startled her. All the color died out of her face as she looked up. Her expression was wondering, pained, but it was for his evident emotion, not for herself.

"No. What is it? Greville, you look so ill! If it is bad news, let me help you to bear it, dear."

He sank rather than sat down in the great armchair behind him, and leaning forward clasped his hands together,

gazing at her with an expression of a man half mad, half cold with fury.

Neva's heart throbbed so violently she could not speak. Greville watched her efforts to be calm and the pain and wonder of her eyes with the same strange gaze.

"Have you forgotten, then?"

His voice stung like a whip.

"Greville, there is nothing I can think of. Tell me, are you angry with me? We have never been apart since we were married; what can it be?" She waited a second. "You frighten me! Tell me, dear, what is it?"

"Only that I have heard tonight of what happened ten years ago. Heard it—" He stopped and started to his feet as though he were choking.

Neva made a sound, not spoken, but it was something that frightened him even in his anger. He stood still.

"You have heard tonight?" she said at last, brokenly. "What did you mean, here, six years ago, when you told me—Mr. Penniston—" She faltered, then with piteous self-control went on: "I do not understand! You said, 'I know everything!'"

"I did not; only that you had been unhappy, and—" he groaned. Then he said, passionately, cuttingly: "I would rather see you dead than that this—"

"Greville, the Pennistons loved me, and—they knew—had known me all my life. Have I been to you—can you believe—" She broke in on his cruel words, but she could not speak coherently. She looked at him once, all her soul in her eyes.

She was very, very white, but held herself with a beauty and dignity which made her seem more lovely than he had yet seen her; then she turned and went slowly out of the room. Only one clear thought remained in her mind; she was conscious of nothing else. A blind instinct forced her to walk down the right corridor to their rooms. She went into her own and shut the door with the same terrible quietness and precision, walked straight to the dressing table and taking up a miniature of herself and her baby hid it in her dress. She did not look at it. She sat down and

leaned her head against the high back of a chair standing beside the bed and tried to think.

"No, I must go to bed and sleep." Her words sounded strangely distinct in the silence.

She rose and undressed, omitting no detail of her usual routine. As she brushed her long hair very carefully and plaited it her face was very still; it was like that of one who is peaceful because for a time all power of suffering has departed.

Presently she knelt down, and then her face grew strained and troubled. She was trying once more to think coherently, but the effort confused and hurt her. Then the settled calm froze it once more and she knelt on and on, until a sound in the street aroused her.

She took up the miniature, and holding it in her hand she looked at it for a long time.

"You will want me always, and he said, 'better dead.'" Her voice quivered a little.

She hesitated a moment and glanced round the room. She wanted something—what was it? Her sleeping draught. Greville disliked pallor and haggard eyes from want of sleep, and she always took whatever he thought was best for her. She must look her loveliest always. As she poured it out and drank it her movements were absolutely noiseless. She might have been a white shadow. Her pale, purely cut face shone for an instant in the soft light of her hanging silver night lamp—Greville's present—which went everywhere with her. She drew off her white dressing gown and laid it carefully over a chair, slipping her shoes off so that they stood ready for her feet should she need them. She sat down on the side of the bed, then, lying back, she drew the clothes around her, shivering in the hot summer night. Her head fell sideways on the pillow, and she put her hand with the miniature in it beneath her cheek. A slight contraction of pain broke through the calm of her face as she closed her eyes.

Silence for a long, long time. She was not asleep; tears were stealing be-

neath her closed lids, and the wet lashes clung to her white cheeks. She could not think clearly, but she suffered terribly at last. Once or twice her bosom moved convulsively, and she cried with piteous restraint.

Then she nestled her head deeper into the pillows, and presently, with the tears on her face and in her throat, she slept.

And her sleep was very long, very peaceful, for the broken heart and shattered mind had only done that which she believed to be right—he had said he wished for it—and she slept on into death, her last breath a broken sob and a prayer that he might forgive, because she had misunderstood him.

IV

THE hours of the night wore on and Greville Wynyard scarcely moved. Once or twice he rose and paced up and down. The lamps in the garden were put out; only the moon at its full shone in through the wide windows. It lighted the picture of his wife that he always carried about with him, a photograph in evening dress. The slender rounded figure, the bare neck and arms, were like a luminous vision. Then the light crept slowly upward and rested on the marvelous face. It was truly the key to her soul. And had not her life side by side with his—that, with all his wealth of love and passion, was an exacting one and not easy even for a love such as hers to guide—had not her life in its most minute detail been the outcome of that pure soul? Little by little the memory of all the words spoken during that crisis of their lives when he had wooed her came back to him.

Especially he remembered Penniston's words:

"I tell you, she is a rare woman. I could love and marry her tomorrow if I were not married and I did not love my wife—and I were not dying." Almost the last words he had spoken, except faint murmurs which Greville now realized were the futile efforts of the dying man to fulfill Neva's wish to tell him all.

What ghastly perversity of fate had played him this irrevocable trick?

A sharp sound in the passage sent him to the door. Was she coming back again? What could she say—or what could he—except the bitter words already spoken? A chaotic anger surged in his very soul. He flung the door open with a crash that echoed through the silence of the night. Two men were leaving the room opposite where he stood. Within it candles burnt on a card table, and the debris of a late supper lay scattered on another one hard by. They looked up, and by the light of a lamp burning on the wall saw Wynyard's terrible face, death white and pinched. Recognizing him, they involuntarily stepped backward. With a hoarse sound he caught one of them by the arm.

"You must tell me more—than I overheard," he said.

No need for further words. The man, whose plain, strong features had grown grave with sudden comprehension, followed the compelling hand in silence. Wynyard drew him into his deserted room and closed the door. The moon filled it with an unearthly light.

Without waiting, for he saw that Greville was beyond the power of speech, the man said hurriedly, his eyes bent on Neva's photograph:

"You must have heard what that babbling fool Rodney said tonight, and not my explanation of the real facts. They were these: Mrs. Neville had a brute and a semi-maniac to deal with in her husband—a man mad with egotism, and holding a Turk's creed as to women. She was to possess no soul, no will but his own; and he had all an egotist's insensate love of tyranny. She was too lenient with him, gave up her own will entirely, though she was head and shoulders above him in every way—until her young sister—a delicate, hysterical girl—came out to India. The husband — her brother-in-law — was young also and scared by illness, devoted to his wife, and thought everything of his sister-in-law's love and care for the former—used to write to her on every occasion to go to the wife. He

was almost too good-looking for a man, but an awfully good fellow all round. Neville was getting on in years, and an accident at polo had ruined his face. He'd a beastly way of making the scars turn purple-gray when annoyed, and he spoke in a voice like a steel knife, looking at his nails as he spoke, never at anyone he addressed, with his eyebrows raised in a sneer.

"He was away once for two days, and when he returned late one night found his wife dressed and starting in a *dâk gharri*, with luggage. A letter had summoned her to the sister, and the brother-in-law was frantic, because mother and newborn child were in danger. You can guess the rest. Neville ordered her back, vowed the story was a lie and that she meant to go off with the brother-in-law. She submitted to his insults. I was living in the next bungalow, and hearing a fracas with the *gharri-wallah* and knowing Neville's temper, I went across the lawn and overheard it all.

"Later in the night another message came, and she rushed over to me in agonies of distress, having slipped out of the house. Her sister was dying and cried for her. Would I explain—she was going to ride the fifty miles to the forest officer's camp; ponies were ready for her and Wyllard was to meet her halfway to take her through the worst bit of road, a roughish part. She gave me the two notes sent her to show Neville. As the devil would have it, they disappeared. Neville refused to have her back again—instituted proceedings for divorce. The sister died before she reached her—and the baby. Then the Pennistons stepped in. Neville was ordered on active service to the Tillai Campaign before the action really commenced; sniped the second day, and left her uncleared and without a penny. The Pennistons took her to live with them. Her people cut her. The brother-in-law married again eventually and stuck to her with his wife, and a few others did also—but her life was hell for years.

"I would have married her at once, had she cared for me. I asked her, but

she wouldn't accept me, and I've never looked at anyone since. She had supported herself by her writing, and at first by typing. Latterly, as you know, she made an income by her books. I daren't presume to advise you, but if you have ever been good to her in your life before, be more so than ever now that you know, for few women have suffered more terribly than she, or have been braver and more nobly patient. She was married as an ignorant girl, too young to realize what she was doing. My wife knew her when little more than a child, and loved her. When my wife died soon after our marriage and I went to India, I met Mrs. Neville and saw for myself how dreadful her existence must be for a refined, sensitive woman, married to a man notoriously, absolutely uncontrolled and at times devilish in his temper and ideas."

Colonel Aylmer had studiously avoided speaking of Neva as Mrs. Wynyard. As he finished her story, the light left her picture and the room in darkness. The moon had paled, and the gray dawn was near at hand.

In silence Greville opened the door against which he was leaning and Aylmer passed out into the corridor.

For a second he hesitated, then he laid his hand on Wynyard's arm.

"Every word I have spoken is God's truth," he said wistfully. "Go to your wife. She is—" His voice grew hoarse and rough. "You *must* know what she is. I know what she suffers if you have spoken rashly. Forgive me. Good night—and God help you!" some sudden feeling made him add as he turned away and shut the door.

Left alone Greville stood still in the darkness, trying to think. He felt that what this man had told him was, as he had said, "God's truth," but he was numb with misery and anger at this accursed trick of fate. His brain seemed frozen. He had caught sight of Aylmer's eyes once as they dwelt on his wife's photograph, and in them had been the unforgotten hunger of a great love. If he had only trusted her as this unknown man had done, had never

wounded her so sorely, almost beyond even her forgiveness!

Leaning against the closed door he pressed his forehead and eyes against his arm, and let the slow, difficult tears fall heavily. He scarcely knew whether they were for her or for himself; he was only conscious of an overwhelming sense of suffering.

Then with fearful distinctness came to him the recollection of the evening when on the terrace below he had finally broken down her long reluctance, her distaste to leaving the widow of her oldest friend. Only the knowledge that Mrs. Penniston was with her people, and his reiterated assurance: "Forget everything and come to me—I know all. Only remember we love one another," had conquered her. He could see her face with that intense concentrated look of pain in the eyes, her paleness and then the glory of her love and its surrender.

"Let the world say what it will, she was, and is, true, true as steel. And she never tried to make her great loveliness the snare it might have been. Over and over again she could have weakened my resolution when we were at variance on matters of judgment."

Memories of her wisdom, her reticent refinement, her tenderness, her exquisite mother love, and a passionate sense of loss swept over him, and bore him down into the depths. He dared not think of what he had just heard—it was too terrible. But he would atone—he would atone for it all!

Conquered and purified by his hours of bitter trial, he rose and walked dazedly down the echoing corridor in the dimness and silence of the dawn. Going into his room he gently closed and locked the door. Then he passed very softly through into hers. Something in his throat rose and choked him as he noted the dainty order of the great apartment and saw that she was lying asleep with the light of his silver lamp on her white face, which was turned toward him full of the peace of a profound rest.

He stood looking down at her, his passion for her wondrous beauty lost at

last in his full comprehension of the fact that her physical perfection would henceforth be as nothing in his eyes compared to her beautiful soul, the "me" she had so often pleaded to him to love the most.

He knelt down beside her and drew her hand from beneath her cheek. The miniature of herself with their child on her bosom fell with a faint sound on his fingers, and thence to the floor. Her hand was cold and her face also as he stooped and kissed her, yet the tears were scarcely dry upon her cheeks. The lids of her closed eyes were sunken and sealed as never in living sleep.

His words of prayer for pardon died on his lips.

With a blinding sense of prevision he put his hand on the heart that he had broken. It was still. Yet it could not

have been long since it ceased to beat with the difficult throbs of approaching death, for there was still a faint warmth above it. She must have died just as he remembered their betrothal.

A sickening sense of betrayal seized him, of irrevocable loss.

She had not regretted for very long the trust that he had shattered. Then he realized with a sudden horror of comprehension that with it he had destroyed the strong, brave mind already so sorely strained by patient suffering, or this had never been—this eternal isolation of death, through which he could never break with his passionate prayers for forgiveness.

He had said she were "better dead," and now he was face to face with her instinctive fulfillment of the last wish of his which she was ever to obey.



BRIDAL THOUGHTS

By CLARA SCHERBNER

I CHIDE myself with owing such a debt
 To one so graciously indulgent, yet
 I hesitate
 In its fulfillment, for too well I know
 The wondrous size to which I've seen it grow
 And aggregate.

For raising my poor soul to heights above,
 Ten thousand kisses is the wage of love.
 A meager sum!
 For all the happiness I feel this day,
 Untold caresses must I hourly pay
 Thro' years to come.

So, Love, produce thy dilatory test,
 Lest this full heart that throbs against his breast
 May overflow
 And spill the gratitude that is his due;
 For, out it must, should any more accrue
 And he not know.

THE TRUTH ABOUT BILLIE

By W. CAREY WONDERLY

IT was five o'clock in the great oaken hall at Medcourt Manor. Around the logwood fire a group of women superbly gowned, and very conscious of the fact, sat and chattered and smoked and watched anxiously the door through which the guns must appear very shortly now. A young and pretty matron frocked in pale canary sat and watched with listless eyes the samovar; her neighbor, a divorcée with very black eyes and very red lips, yawned over a volume of Bourget. A fine, cold rain had kept the feminine half of the house party indoors all afternoon, and a country house in rainy weather minus men is very like an egg eaten without salt.

"I hate this sort of thing," cried the pretty matron presently. "Every time I accept for a house party I declare it will be the last, and yet here I am again. It's unpardonably boring."

"Especially when one's hostess won't allow bridge," returned the other. "Margaret Medcourt is a dear little thing, but I am firmly convinced that she came out of the ark with Noah. No bridge nor roulette wheels! Heavens, a person can't smoke and sleep all the time, and when the men are out shooting, I'd like to know what else there is to do!"

A low, amused laugh sounded behind her. "There's always your dearest friend, Beatrice," said a mocking voice.

The divorcée turned indolently in her chair, saw the speaker, and made a comical *moue*.

"My dearest friend—what, Vida?" she asked.

"Oh, your dearest friend to do, of course," came back the answer.

"You are so wonderfully droll, Vida,

dear," said the matron in the canary frock. She turned her back upon her, and spoke to her neighbor with the red lips and the black eyes. "Quite like a performing bear or a trick pony one sees at a vaudeville, isn't she?"

"My only bank account—my sense of humor," laughed the voice again.

The two women on the divan watched her over their teacups, as she trailed gracefully off down the room. She was a remarkably interesting person. Very tall and slim and willowy, with dull coppery hair and gray eyes under black lashes, she mostly affected pale greens, and her appearance was a trifle bizarre, not to say startling. A playwright had once said that she would make a charming widow, a widow who would picture well in problem dramas; and there is little doubt that this is just what Vida Blackburn called to mind. But the fact remained that she was not a widow, nor, in truth, a wife. She would be named upon introduction simply "Miss Blackburn."

"Abominable woman!" said the matron at last.

The other's lips formed in a plain and unmistakable "Cat!"

"And how Margaret tolerates her—" said the canary woman. "Do you know," she added, lowering her voice, "I've heard that Margaret's husband insists upon that woman being asked to all these house parties!"

"I don't doubt it in the least," nodded the other, with an envious little sigh.

And Vida Blackburn, her green draperies floating out behind her like a cloud of deep seafoam, trailed down the room

until she came to Margaret Medcourt's chair. Her hostess greeted her with a handclasp and a welcoming smile, and Vida sank down among a heap of Oriental cushions.

"It's been an awful day, Madge, dear," she said frankly.

"I know. The men will be back shortly now," returned Mrs. Medcourt a little hurriedly.

"Heaven be praised! My prayer has been answered," smiled Miss Blackburn.

She took a gold monogrammed cigarette case from the bosom of her gown, and striking a lucifer applied it to the end of the selected luxury between her penciled lips. Mrs. Medcourt watched her in open fascination. There was an air of reckless indolence about her that charmed one in spite of herself.

"You look like a stage villainess," Margaret ventured with a faint smile. "Really, Vida, dear, you do such outlandish things that people are bound to talk."

"Yes, I know, Madge, but let them—it's terrible in a country house without men. By the way, whom do you expect on the five o'clock train?"

"Oh—h, Bob Thornton, my cousin. You know him, Vida."

"I knew him—long ago," corrected Vida Blackburn slowly.

"He's been in South Africa for five years now—five years, think, Vida!" sighed Margaret.

"No—o, I'm afraid. I wasn't exactly a bud when he went away, Madge," laughed Vida, puffing lazily at her cigarette. "Five years! That is a good long time now, isn't it!"

"Well, now that he's come home, I hope he'll settle down and be happy," sighed his cousin. "If he'd only marry like any other man and stop all this silly globe trotting! Do you know, that's why I've asked him down here, Vida."

"Mercy, no, dear; I'm not a clairvoyant!"

"Don't tease, Vida!"

"Upon my word, Madge—"

"Nor swear. The truth is, I've asked Robert down here to meet a girl whom I hope very, very much he will

fall in love with and marry. You see, I'm a matchmaker like the rest of my sex. And Robert has been unfettered too long; he wants a home."

"You always were too good-hearted, Madge. I remember the home for stray cats you founded," said Miss Blackburn, lighting a fresh cigarette. "It—it was awfully good fun."

"But Bob ought to get married. He owes it to—to everybody, everything," cried his pretty cousin. "He is young, handsome, fairly wealthy—why shouldn't he get married and settle down?"

"Why, indeed?" echoed Vida, laughing.

"And dear little Billie—" cooed Margaret.

Miss Blackburn started and dropped her cigarette ash in her lap, and her gray eyes narrowed until the white had entirely disappeared. She clutched nervously at Margaret's hand, paling beneath her rouge.

"Why, yes, she is such a dear," smiled Mrs. Medcourt, suspecting nothing. And if she had noticed the girl's face she would only have laughed and set it down to her eccentricities.

"And just Bob's kind of girl, if I remember correctly," she went on. "Billie is so essentially womanly, Vida, and believe me, it is that a man wants in a wife. A sporty girl, a mannish girl, a slangy girl—they amuse men, laugh at them and with them, mix their highballs and roll their cigarettes; they are pretty good pals, but as for anything nearer and dearer—No, they want fluffiness and ruffles, blue eyes, blond hair, demureness and a point of view that always toes the mark. Billie Ainsley is the kind of girl men marry. She is like a sweet young saint."

"Yes, just about as interesting," laughed Vida, but she was pale under her coating of rouge and her eyes gleamed strangely.

"Do you mean you don't like Billie?" questioned Mrs. Medcourt. "What can you have against her?"

"Why, I hardly know her. But she has never struck me as being much fun," shrugged Vida.

"She isn't, and it is that charm that appeals so to a man," finished Margaret triumphantly.

"I see. She isn't down for tea, is she?" smiled Vida.

"No; taking a nap for the dance to-night, I fancy," explained pretty Mrs. Medcourt in her wholly artless fashion.

"Just as well; the men are away. A couch and Paul de Kock aren't so bad on a rainy afternoon, little woman."

"Paul de Kock! Why, Billie has never even heard of the man, my dear," cried Mrs. Medcourt aghast.

"Her maid loaned it to mine," nodded Miss Blackburn, moving off down the room.

At this point there was a general cry of welcome, and the men, tired and dirty, lounged into the hall. The women swarmed about them, and smiled and laughed and talked, all signs of weariness vanishing as if by magic. Vida Blackburn went from one to the other, a jest here, a rebuke there, daring, brilliant, wonderful, the center of all eyes, the desired of all men.

Suddenly in her merry flight she came upon a man in traveling togs, who stood a little apart, staring straight before him and unheeding her gay presence.

Vida knew him at once. She had not seen Robert Thornton for five years, but it is not hard to recall a face one has not forgotten.

"Bobby Thornton, welcome home!" she cried, extending both hands.

But the man's eyes traveled straight across her charming head, and a little puzzled, Vida turned to see the person who had so caught his fastidious fancy.

On the second step of the long staircase stood Billie Ainsley, almost babyish in a simple white muslin frock. She was smiling with evident relish at the scene which stretched before her, the women welcoming the men after a day with the guns. In truth, she looked so very pretty and innocent that for a moment Vida's very heart stood still. What chance had she, had anyone against this charming girl? What Margaret had said was only too true. Billie was the kind of girl a man mar-

ried, and she, she was the type they laughed with and kissed.

She was turning away silently and ashamed when Thornton called her name.

"Vida, Vida Blackburn!"

At the sound of his voice she threw her head back and made a fascinating *moue* with her handsome shoulders.

"So he didn't marry a Hottentot in his travels, after all, did he?" she mocked. "Hello, Bobby, I'm glad to see you back with us again, old man."

"And I'm jolly glad to be back, Vida," he returned, grasping her hand firmly. "And now where's Margaret? By the way, who is that child standing over there on the stairs, Vida?"

Vida turned, glanced at the girl on the staircase and laughed mockingly in Thornton's face.

"What—already?" she cried, frankly amused.

"Oh-h-h, rot! You know what I mean."

"Yes, I do," she returned. "Let me see. Her name is Wilma Ainsley—Billie for short. Her father is a country parson and her mother is an angel—I firmly believe; her years have frightened the birthdays out of every woman at the Manor, and Margaret adores her. That's all. You know the color of her hair and eyes, that there's a dimple in her left cheek and that her ankles are divine. And, in passing, those white muslin frocks she wears are made by Paquin and did not cost thirty-nine cents a yard, as you fondly imagine. Paquin—yes, her father's a country parson. Six hundred a year is his salary."

He eyed her keenly, but she only smiled impudently, her eyes dancing with suppressed mirth. Down in his heart he called her a wonderfully clever woman, always interesting and never twice the same. Likewise, she never bored him. But what he said was:

"You're downright mean, Vida."

To which she retorted: "I'm a woman, Bobby."

Margaret Medcourt was delighted to have her cousin at the Manor. She stood on tiptoe and kissed him, scolded

and caressed and cajoled him all in one breath. Then she sent him off to his man to dress for dinner. She had taken him under her motherly wing, and Vida Blackburn, watching the little scene from afar, knew she would only let him out to seek the shelter of a home tree of his own. But for the strange, weary feeling deep within her, she would have laughed delightedly at this merry comedy. As it was, she caught up her pale green draperies and without a word sought her apartments.

At dinner, maneuvering Mrs. Medcourt succeeded in placing Billie Ainsley next to Robert Thornton. Miss Ainsley was charming. She made Thornton think of a pretty, well-mannered child, who is permitted to dine at table with "grown ups" as an especial treat. She wore another of her famous muslin frocks, high-necked and soft and frilly, and the illusion was carried out even to her pretty hands, guiltless of rings, and with dimples where most people have knuckles. She talked to Thornton in a soft contralto voice, not of books and plays and art, but of her life at home at her father's rectory in the Berkshires, where her chickens and garden and parish poor made up her daily existence.

To Robert Thornton, world-worn and weary, she was as a tonic, like a cold breath of crisp, invigorating air that is suddenly let into a room stale with exotics. He was content to sit quietly and let her do the talking, happy to be near her, and very well satisfied with his lot.

At the other end of the table, Vida Blackburn laughed and shocked with her keen, ever ready tongue, jumping from thin ice to *terra firma* with practised skill, and watching silently all the while Robert Thornton across the orchid-decked cloth. She knew, none better, the ways of a maid with a man, and, furthermore, she knew the maid and the man. From Thornton's appearance she read the stage of the conversation—Billie was telling him, with all her artless artfulness, the story of the calf who had broken away and lost itself in a neighboring cornfield. She

was glad when Margaret gave the signal and the women filed out of the room, leaving Thornton with the men and the liqueurs.

"And how did you like my big cousin from the wilds?" cried Margaret Medcourt, while the women yawned in the drawing-room. "How did you like Robert Thornton, Billie?"

"Oh, so much," smiled Miss Ainsley. "He is so big, and I dearly love a big man."

"It's his pocketbook, my dear, that accounts for his largeness," nodded Vida Blackburn laughingly.

Margaret Medcourt came hurriedly to the rescue. She sincerely liked Vida, and the house seemed very tame without her. The men expected her and voiced their sentiments, but at times, really, at times she was very trying.

"Sing something, dear," she suggested, stopping beside her chair.

Vida shook her head. "Tetrazzini is not billed for tonight. Off night," she smiled.

"Oh, do, please, one of those cute little 'nigger' songs, Miss Blackburn," cried Billie Ainsley, clapping her hands.

"Wait until the men come in, Miss Ainsley," murmured the canary matron. "Then Vida will sing for you."

Miss Ainsley's eyes opened wide. She glanced from Vida to the long vista of rooms that ended at the dining room doors. Then she went to the piano.

"I'll sing now, shall I?" she said, and seating herself, she began to play just as the men sauntered in.

She was wonderfully clever, a worthy rival, Vida Blackburn decided in the days that followed. Billie Ainsley was always with men, but never one of them. She was ready to follow the guns in the dog cart, but she did not shoot. She would watch silently for hours at a stretch a game of billiards, but she did not play. She was interested in their discussions on modern literature, but she did not read their books. On the other hand, she knew the name of every leaf and shrub. The men delighted in going with her to Mrs. Medcourt's poultry yard, and they even let her beat them at tennis, which they played with

all the ardor of the impossible persons of the Duchess's novels.

It both amused and frightened Vida Blackburn when one morning Thornton declared he was tired of guns and grouse and would stay at home and learn tennis with Miss Ainsley instead.

They were standing on the east terrace awaiting the break which was to take the women several miles through the wood. Vida wore brown. From the crown of her head to her smartly shod feet she was a symphony in russet.

"So you're not coming—really, Bob?" she asked again.

"Not today, Vida. I've promised Miss Ainsley to be very good if she will consent to teach me tennis this morning," Thornton replied. "Too much golf of late. Tennis will prove a delightful change, I think."

Vida whistled shrilly and the dogs, thinking it their cue, flocked about her in dozens, jumping against her skirts and fawning and barking gladsomely.

"Every dog loves Vida," said Margaret Medcourt, smiling. "Vida and dogs and horses, horses and dogs and Vida."

"And men and men and men," added young Daintree, with a grin in Miss Blackburn's direction. Philip Daintree was Medcourt's cousin, a penniless, beardless youth, who was named as one of Vida's most persistent admirers. That she only laughed at him mattered little.

"Vida Blackburn is the most gentlemanly woman I know," declared Thornton, who had been studying her as she stood there in her mannish tailored suit surrounded by the dogs.

But she only shrugged her shoulders, called to the dogs and turned abruptly away.

When they were alone together Thornton turned to Miss Ainsley, an apology on his lips.

"I shouldn't have laughed, I know," he said, but Miss Blackburn is so really clever. She's rather like a three-ring circus—I was awfully keen on a circus when I was a kid—and Vida Blackburn—well, there's always something

doing and that something always new. Shall we go to the courts?"

After this it seemed to Vida that the game was lost, and that, try as she might, there was no use in longer struggling against the inevitable. It seemed very plain to her that Robert Thornton was in love with charming Billie Ainsley, and while she laughed and said she didn't care a rap, there was a dull, aching pain at her heart that was new and strange and that frightened her at times because she didn't just see how it could be helped. She was a man's woman, she told herself again and again, as good a fellow as any one of the men at Medcourt Manor, a pal to be proud of and swear by. But her philosophy didn't ease the pain within her heart.

She wore a wonderful gown that night of green and white, with lilies of the valley in her hair and at her waist, and a rare old emerald bracelet on her arm. It was her last night at the Medcourts'; on the morrow she would leave for another country house, and going, give Billie Ainsley a clear field.

In the drawing-room before the coming of the men she lounged in a big, cushioned chair and thought it all out. And first and foremost came Robert Thornton's happiness. It came to her all of a sudden that she loved him, and this, she told herself, was why she said spiteful things of Billie Ainsley and told the men she read Paul de Kock on the quiet. She was jealous of Billie—jealous because Robert loved her innocence rather than her own world-wide experience and good-fellowship. Billie was good and sweet and pretty, and she—she was only mean and small and jealous.

She watched the girl from behind her thick, dark lashes. She was sitting quietly turning the pages of one of Margaret's ridiculous books of views of Italy. And Vida's very heart stood still as she watched her, but first and foremost came Thornton's happiness. It seemed to her that if he were happy, why, then, the rest mattered little; this was the measure of her love.

She scarcely spoke to Thornton dur-

ing the entire evening. She sang and danced and laughed and flirted until she was tired out and her head ached furiously. She was glad when the red-lipped divorcée took her place at the piano and began to sing Yvette's "Les Souvenirs." It gave her a chance to breathe. Quietly and unobserved she slipped away and out on the inclosed veranda.

It was very quiet out there. Palms from the Medcourt hothouses and little wicker chairs were placed invitingly *tête-à-tête*. It was very delightful, and so cool and dark after the hot, glaring rooms. Vida sank down in a chair and closed her eyes.

Suddenly she heard voices. She could not see the speakers, but clear and even came a woman's soft, throaty contralto.

"It will make no difference, Phil—how can it?" the voice mocked sweetly. "I will always love you, you jealous boy, and he, he thinks me an angel—you know that type of man. He has seen everything, everybody, everywhere, and now he means to turn over a new leaf—with me the leaf, I guess. He's unpardonably boring, Philip, dear."

"But," came a man's voice, angrily, breathlessly, "he's Margaret's cousin and I'm Medcourt's. God, it's not just white, Billie! And again I want you all and not another man's wife."

The throaty contralto laughed amusedly. "Nonsense, Phil; you couldn't keep me in gloves, and I'd very soon lose my dimples without them. Be thankful for what the gods drop in your path, dear boy. As Thornton's wife and your—"

But Vida turned quickly away, her heart beating wildly, for the woman was Billie Ainsley, and the man, Philip Daintree. She had always suspected that Billie's innocence was partly make-believe, but she had never guessed this, never dreamed it of the pretty, blue-eyed child.

But she found a fierce, savage pleasure in the knowledge; she could have cried aloud for joy. This woman, this person, was the girl men married, and she, the Vida Blackburns of the world,

were the kind they kissed. Kissed! She had been men's pal and rejoiced in the title, but never more, nothing more—nothing, never! And Thornton, who had passed her by—he would never marry Billie Ainsley now! She would get him and show him the truth, let him see and hear even as she had seen and heard. Oh, she was glad, glad, wild with joy!

Then, just as she opened the big glass doors, she saw Robert and knew that he was coming out on the veranda, and coming would find Billie and Daintree together. And suddenly she remembered that she loved Robert and that Robert loved—Billie.

She threw wide her arms and blocked his way.

"No, you mustn't, you mustn't!" she cried passionately. "No, Bobby, please, please!"

"Why?" he asked quietly, his hand grasping the door.

"Because," she faltered, "because you—mustn't. I want you—to come with me. It is cold out there. Do come."

"You mean that Billie Ainsley and young Daintree are out there?" he asked calmly.

The look froze upon her face; her lips twitched convulsively. She put out her hands to steady herself and he caught her, holding her close against his breast.

"Vida, little woman," he said, "why, you're trembling!"

"You know?" she sobbed. "You know the truth about Billie, and you don't care?"

He nodded gravely. "Everybody knew but Margaret and yourself. Yes, at first I was taken in, but afterwards I learned a few tricks myself."

"I am sorry," she said.

He shook his head. "I'm not," he said quietly. "Never sorry, but rather glad, because it has given me a chance to discover a new quality in the heart of the woman I love—and who loves me. Am I right, Vida?"

By way of an answer her arms stole around his neck, and she sobbed happily in his strong embrace.

SHADOWS O' THE FOG

By LIZZIE GAINES WILCOXSON

THE fog rolled up from the sea, and the world o'er the moor became a foaming vat. The three tall nuns from the convent at the edge of the moor were as glooming, batlike specters as they walked onward and onward o'er the moor, with unbreaking, silent pace, keeping side by side.

Maggie Bodine pranced in their rear and mocked their striding, flat-footed gait, and flapped her wide shawl to sway like the folds of their black circulars.

She was a graceless sinner, this same Maggie Bodine, and had little respect for the back of any creature; but she took care not to draw near enough to attract the nuns' attention, so they paced swaying onward, and Maggie mocked them behind, till in the heat of her mimicry she exaggerated their pace grotesquely, and at last forsook her mimicking and turned her steps into a fantastic fog dance, lifting her petticoats high and twisting her shawl out of the way.

And Maggie Bodine was followed in the rear by a horseman, who took care not to come too near; but he rocked from side to side in silent mirth, and coaxed his horse always to softer pace lest he break the spell.

And the procession moved onward o'er the moor, each at his own gait, and all like phantoms in the moonlit fog.

After a time the three tall nuns swung leftward and overways to where was the house of the boatman whose three boys had that day been drowned in the sea; and Maggie Bodine gave a final pirouetting salute after their vanishing forms, dropped her petticoat and untwisted her shawl and turned to

double on her tracks, for she had come a full half-mile beyond her own turning.

Then she saw the horseman and the horse, but Maggie Bodine had as little concern for the face of any creature as she had respect for his back. She turned her face pertly up to the rider.

The young man drew near and bared his head.

"If you please, can you tell me, is there a house nearabouts where a traveler may stop o'er night?" he asked eagerly.

"To be sure! And what if I can; shall you be wanting to stop there?"

"And why else would I ask?"

"Oh, I thought perhaps 'twas for to make a chance to speak to me," sauced Maggie Bodine.

"Well, and what if? Who would not hang in a treetop for that chance?" gallantly protested the young man.

"And maybe you will come to that; for my husband will indeed hang you to a treetop when he comes home and finds your feet under his table," predicted Maggie Bodine. "For he is a rank jealous man!"

"Jealousy is a poor compliment to any woman's virtue," urged the rider sagely.

Maggie Bodine glanced upward slantwise with a wickedly mischievous expression.

"Pouf! Do not be afraid. He is away from his home and does not return till three days from his going. I will show you the way to the house. Get off your horse and let me up instead. It is bad manners to sit a horse while a lady stands."

The young man came tumbling hastily down, and would have helped

her to mount, but she seemed to light upward like a bird, even before he could touch her. Then she flecked the bridle and set off at so merciless a pace that the young man was drenched with sweat as much as with fog when they reached the high, dark palisade that looked like a black fortress in the ever densing fog.

"True, an' when I turned first an' saw you I thought you were the Silly Friar from the monastery," she told him, peeping up from the hoodlike arrangement of her shawl, as she hunted for some mysteriously hidden bolts in the palisade wall.

"And why?"

"Well, I cannot say, as there is not over-particular resemblance. I suppose it was because I had first thought the three tall nuns were friars from the monastery over the hill. I am o'er-given to many errors!" she pleaded.

"I would be included in your errors sooner than be left out of your thoughts altogether," averred the young man, "but I vow I do not wish to remind you of a silly friar."

Maggie Bodine laughed wickedly and jerked the horse's head around between them and led him into the inclosure.

"I alone call him 'Silly.' They call him a 'godly young novice,' who will make a saintly father! Ha, ha!" she mocked in a drooling, unctuous voice.

The young man slanted a queer look at her impudent face, and darkly flushed in the white fog.

A dog of ferocious aspect bounded out, but at a word from Maggie Bodine ceased barking and walked beside her warily, snarling.

A small, squat house stood outlined in the fog. They skirted around this to a barn, where Maggie Bodine commanded the young man to throw the saddle off his horse.

"Just leave him. He will find hay. We will come out by and by with the lantern to feed him; but I myself am starving now, so we will go in an' have supper first."

The three of them, Maggie Bodine, the young man and the savage dog, went into the cabin. Maggie Bodine

opened the door by the simple device of a string latch, and directly inside, she lighted a pair of big tallow candles and threw some wood on a bed of dying embers in the wide chimney fireplace. The room was soon gaudy with light; and bidding the young man sit beside the fire, Maggie Bodine proceeded with supper preparations.

The interior of the cabin transpired to be arranged in two rooms, one-half of the cabin in each. The room in which were Maggie Bodine and the young man and the savage dog was the general utility room. It was a wonderful sort of room—so long, so wide, so low, so bright with the fire and the two big candles, and with Maggie Bodine in her scarlet shawl and her bright red bodice whipping about from stove to cupboard and from cupboard to table and back again.

There were no pictures nor books nor musical instruments in the room; yet there was an impression that it was crowded with such things, it seemed so keenly alive with forces. A rack of guns was above the outer door, and many hunting knives of different sorts and shapes—some new and shining, some old and blood-rusty—were ranged above the mantel. The new ones flashed back the light from the two big candles.

As she flitted humming over the bare floor, in her red bodice and green skirt, the scarlet ribbon fluttering in her feathery black curls, Maggie Bodine reminded the young man of a gorgeous tropical bird. He was very fagged from his fast trot afoot across the heavy moor; and the warmth of his steaming clothes would ordinarily have drowsed him exceedingly, but he sat stiff upright in his deep rush chair, following Maggie Bodine with alert, curious gaze.

When supper was all set she whirled about with a sweeping courtesy and bade him to the table. She dragged up the deep rush chair where she had placed his cup, and then in a flash perched herself upon a high stool opposite.

Though she had protested she was nigh starved, she seemed less interested

in her food than in teaching the savage dog to catch morsels flung at him from a long distance. But the young man did full justice to the meal, for he was, in truth, exceeding hungry.

When he had drained his cup and pushed back his plate, Maggie Bodine folded her arms across the table and gazed upon the young man reflectively, fixing full upon him her blackly gray eyes under their black lashes, her curving scarlet lips temptingly beautiful.

"Come now—what do you think of me? You have fallen desperately silent," she jeered, and for a scudding moment the young man glanced aslant at her as he had when they came through the palisade gate.

"I have fallen desperately in love," said the young man boldly.

"To speak so!" mocked Maggie Bodine in high, tragic mien. "'Tis like a man, i' truth! When he hath devoured the last biscuit and licked the spoon, his maw hath pushed his heart up to his eyes! The love o' a man is a thing with a spoon bowl for a head, a knife for a body an' two fork tines for to stand upon. It's bred in an oven an' sleeps in a saucepan.

"Now my direful husband would love me none the less if my hair turned a wisp of gray string an' I grew so thin my bones rattled, if I did but bake his meats tasty an' fill his soup dish full.

"Which reminds me—it ill behooves me to tease you for the last dinner you will probably ever eat, poor fine young Fog Prince! For before another moon is in the sky you will, I have no doubt, be hanging from the treetop you so hankered for. Ah, la, I know! You will not be the first one so to hang!"

And she wagged her black curls with direful gravity, while her eyes glinted mischief.

She was arrested in her speech by the entrance from without of a shambling figure, so hung about by a long cowl-hooded cloak that at first the young man did not know if it were man or woman, but the enveloping hood being flapped aside, he observed a cranium of sparse hair, and noted that it was a male creature with not overwise face,

as so revealed by sagging lips and vacant, small eyes.

"Hello, Julius! You are late to-night. There's a horse in the barn that belongs to this person here. Look after him an' feed him, an' bring some logs an' a pail o' water. An' that will be all for tonight."

She sat fiddling with her spoon in her cup until the logs and pail of water were fetched and the shambling creature had gone for good.

"Now, Fog Prince, you may sit beside the fire again, an' I will clean our platters."

"What pleasure would be like to assisting you?" responded the young man, gazing upon her still more boldly.

Maggie Bodine was observant of the flickering flame point, and her pert daring recklessly challenged him.

"I would not take pleasure from any man when it comes to one so gay and gallant as yourself, sir," she answered, tilting her head sidewise and lifting an upward glance of extravagant coquetry. And the flames glinting in the depths of his eyes leaped upward like fresh trimmed candles; and Maggie Bodine threw back her head and laughed aloud, and the face of the young man flooded darkly flush.

Then, like a flash, without another word, she hopped off the stool and ran to the stove and busied herself getting the pan and water to wash the platters and cups. She brought the pan and placed it on the table close beside the young man.

"Your part will be to dry them as I hand them to you," she admonished, giving him a fresh white cloth. "Be sure that you do it well, an' don't fall behind a-watching me. I doubt if you had better be trusted to do it at all, but maybe if you hold to it attentively enough you can. Now I will show you—so—an' this way—an' this"—holding the platter before his nose and grasping his hand that held the cloth and rubbing it round and round the new washed platter in an abandon of daring.

Then, laughing, she began to plunge each dish into the pan of water with a

mighty splash, springing back herself as the water leaped upward.

"You sit nervously," she expostulated.

"I will break the next dish you throw into the water," said the young man.

Her face puckered in mischief, and she picked up the biggest platter, a pattern of rare design.

"This," quoth she, "once belonged to a queen. Nay, I should say a queen once belonged to this, for her head was carried upon it from the headsman's block to the market place, to be there gazed upon by the crowd. I fair treasure this platter," and so saying she plunged it in with a slap that well-nigh emptied a fourth of the pan, and then she washed it slowly round and round, and taking it out handed it to the young man with a dare in her blackly gray eyes and on her smiling, curving, scarlet lips. He struck it sharply across the edge of the table, letting the pieces fall to the floor.

Maggie Bodine looked down upon it surprised.

"I didn't think you would do it!" she exclaimed, mocking, mischievous laughter in her face. "The Fog Prince is a bad-mannered prince. What woman hath had a hand in so ill a piece o' work, Prince?"

And she peered close into his face till the glinting flame flared.

He stood up and folded his arms across his chest, and under his tempestuous flare of anger her mischievous mocking went oddly out like a frost picture under the passing of a hot hand.

"I wish, madam," he sneered, "that I were not a gentleman."

"And were you not," she replied, standing back coldly, "you had not been offered the hospitality of William Bodine's house." And scornful anger masked their faces waxenly.

"The wife of William Bodine hath been exceeding kind," he answered with sneering emphasis, "but I choose to accept of your hospitality no longer. Permit me to get my horse and go." And his voice shook in anger.

"An' not stay to be hanged o' top o' th' tree? Oh, fie, brave Prince! Oh,

fie, gallant knight o' the Fog Land! Come now, Prince, you have supped o' my cup, an' you shall pay. I will not permit you to go this night. Come, dear Prince," cried Maggie Bodine, all a-melt with laughing mischief, and a-mock with reckless daring again, and laying her hand in the breath of a touch upon his rough sleeve. "Oh, come, brave Prince o' Fog Land an' move your chair to the fire, an' I will tell you a charming story, all about that tall, fierce man, my husband, who will surely hang you o' top o' the tree i' the morning!" and she dragged her own high stool bouncing over the floor to the fire. The young man followed, his face prickly with sulk and fret; but it was impossible for him to attend with his thoughts upon the long rigmarole she spun about the "tall, fierce man, my husband," as she sat, perched like a gaudy firefly in the brilliant light; for his senses were full devoured in watching her.

"And now, Prince o' Fog Dreams," she concluded, wagging her finger at him impressively, "the morrow morning at exactly three hours before dawn will make the third day from the day of his going, which, by the same deed, will be the time o' his coming; an' to-morrow morning by four o' the clock he will reach here from the Thumb-o'-the-Glove, where he will anchor. He is a wicked and profane man, an' rank jealous. He will, I doubt not at all, murder you straight out with one of those sharpen knives, or, if you prefer it, hang you at once a-top o' a tree."

She uttered these prophecies with great relish and portentous pretense of regret.

"Well, well, I will do what I can for you, though I do not promise I shall be able to save you; but I will come in early an' give you breakfast before you are to die. Meanwhile, I fear you have ill choice of a couch. There is Sir Bruin"—she indicated a great hide hung on the wall; "you may throw him before the hearth an' I will pass you a rug from the other room, an' you can lie before the blaze, or you can sit, Sir Prince, in that same rush chair."

She flashed away instantly and returned with the rug, then laid her hand in light mocking in his own. She put on a face of counterfeit gravity.

"Good night, Sir Prince! Good night, dear Prince, to die so early in the morning!" And with the savage dog at her heels she went into the next room.

The hours seemed but short minutes till at soon past three in the morning Maggie Bodine, crimson-gowned, pushed open the thick, narrow door that shut the rooms apart, and stepped softly inside, a pair of newly lighted candles in her hands. She placed them in the empty sockets and softly put fresh logs on the embers whiting on the hearth.

She looked over upon the figure prone upon Sir Bruin. It was a goodly figure, tall and fine of limb and broad of chest and shoulder. A fine, noble face; a beautiful head shocked with curls as thick and black as her own. He lay straight and flat as a carven figure, his face turned a little from her.

"Yes, he's fine an' han'some to see. What a true pity he is to die!" she mused pensively aloud. "I can find but a single fault with him: his nose is a trifle short."

"Perhaps the lady would share some of hers," suggested the sleeper.

Maggie Bodine slipped her slim fingers down the bridge of her straight nose.

"I would greatly like to oblige a prince so near to die, but I have never considered that I had too much, an' the Silly Friar admires it excellently just as it is! I have pulled it long, weeping for my sins."

"And having no sins to weep for, my own remains virtuously short," he retorted, turning him sidewise, half reclining on his elbow.

"Your sins an' virtues will be all the same in a very short time from now," she augured. "But come, get up an' hang Sir Bruin back on the wall. We will have bacon an' coffee ready betime my dreadful husband comes. He will be here i' less than an hour's time. Come, Prince o' Fog Dreams; you may slice

the bacon an' I will set out the cups, an' together we will cheer away your last sad hour!"

So the young man sliced the bacon, and Maggie Bodine whisked her red-tailed gown in haste around the room, getting ready the breakfast betime the arrival of her dreadful husband. The time was short till the heaviest of treads tramped upon the porch, and the door was thrown open, and a great, tall man entered with a lusty noise, all frowsy in seaman's garments, and bringing in with him a load of bundles and sprays of sea smells.

As he hurled an armful of bundles onto the floor, Maggie Bodine ran at him like a crimson streak and threw herself into his arms.

"W-o-w-o-w!" blew the great man, embracing and shaking her down in the fashion of a great, shaggy St. Bernard handling a frail kitten. Then he became aware of the young man, who stood straight outlined against the fire blaze. Maggie Bodine saw, and with an exaggerated courtesy sweeping backward she said:

"Prince o' Fog Dreams, this is my dreadful husband," and with another deep sweeping courtesy she said: "An' William Bodine, *this* is the Prince o' Fog Land, who came a-riding to your gate on a gallant beast, all out o' the fog o' the evening. He ate your sup an' slept upon your bed, an' now waits to hang o' this morning!"

And Maggie Bodine folded her arms in a cross over her breast, courtesied again, her face a-gleam with wicked, mischievous mocking. The young man was drawn up in astonished haughtiness, his face flushing darkly.

"W-o-o-w! The jade! The vixen! Don't mind her at all," roared the great man boisterously, filling the room with a boom like sea breakers with his great voice. "A welcome to you, sir, an' I hope the vixen has made you comfortable! Don't mind the nonsense o' her! She's ne'er naught but a torment." And he wrenched the young man's hand in a hearty grasp.

"My name is William McDeam," said the young man, still stiff with haughti-

ness, for he was a-fret at the foolishness that had been placed upon him.

"A good name, a good name, sir! A William McDeam was a friend o' my father before me," heartily answered the great man, booming out his welcome, stamping about, divesting himself of his shaggy, wet outer coat.

"Does my husband want to breakfast now?" inquired Maggie Bodine, prancing mincingly up before the great man and making him a mock courtesy.

"Husband! Ho, ho! Don't you mind o' her, McDeam," roared the great man. "She's a jade! A vixen, this sister o' mine!"

"Sister!" cried the young man. "Is this lady not your wife?"

"Wife! Damn me, no! I take it no compliment to be asked the question if

you've known her an hour! Wife, no! Ho, ho! It's a pity I'd feel for him she was wife to!" and with boisterous laughter he tramped heavily to the table, inviting McDeam to come along.

As the great man sat in the blaze of light, McDeam now noted the likeness in the full, deep gray eyes, the same slender, thin-nostriled nose, and the same beautiful forehead, a-topped with black hair, thick and curling. His face was half hidden in a curling black beard.

Flashing a resolute look at Maggie Bodine, he said to his host:

"Then, Mister Bodine, I give you leave to give me your pity, for when I've made myself better known to you, I will ask you to give me your sister for my wife."



GUNNING

By MORGAN SHEPARD

I'D like to go a-hunting
For a pair of dimples shy,
That come for just a moment,
To tease and hurry by.
They play a game at hiding,
Mid chin and rosy cheek;
A jolly game, by jingo,
That smacks of hide-an'-seek.

They fly and flash and flutter,
In luring wonder brush
Made by her lips in laughter,
A-tangled in a blush.
Hey, dare I go a-gunning
In such a place as this,
With only talcum powder,
And non-explosive kiss?

Say, dimples—naughty dimples,
Stay just a little while,
And get into a mix-up
With a captivating smile.
Just give that smile a moment
To get its meshes spun;
Then I'll get busy gunning,
With my "polished" kissing gun.

SUNBEAM*

By FEDERICO MARIANI

CHARACTERS

WALTER HERVEY

Is about forty-eight years of age. He is neither a handsome nor a bad-looking man. No one stops to consider his features, but everybody can easily size him up as a man of even spirits and extremely temperate and methodical in his habits. His aspect is grave, almost solemn, and his deportment remarkably sedate. He is very particular in all his financial transactions—he never forgets that it takes one hundred cents to make a dollar. He is by no means a young fellow, but very likely he never was. He rarely smiles. He speaks slowly and sententiously. He seems to weigh every word he utters. Lively people call him a "bore."

MRS. FITZGERALD

Is a middle-aged woman, very ladylike, who has not lost entirely her charm of former years. She has a slender figure with a well shaped head and abundant hair of rather indefinite color. The way she dresses and carries herself shows that she is not willing, so far, to consider the problem of her age. She still wishes to please people, and they find her a perfectly harmless little woman and can't help liking her.

LYDIA SEYMOUR

Is a beautiful young girl endowed with an inexhaustible desire to enjoy life. Her profuse, silken hair shines like real gold; her mouth is small and finely molded, while her eyes are large and full of animation. She has easy manners, though there is a mark of distinction about them. She has been brought up in luxury and never knew and perhaps never will know the value of a dollar. Things have undergone a great change around her, but it doesn't seem to have worried her. A pedant would be likely to call her a "careless child." Young men admire her indiscriminately and think she is a "dear."

JIM GORDON

Is a handsome young man, clean shaven, with a wholesome complexion, bright brown eyes and brown hair. He is the typical hearty, good-natured American fellow. He will do anything to help a friend and will readily stake his life for the girl he loves. He has his drawback, of course—no man is without it but the bore: he is very inconsiderate about money matters. The so-called highly respectable

people delight in denouncing him as a "reckless youth," but the pretty girls he knows seem to have no objection to his recklessness; they say he is a "good fellow."

PLACE: *New York City.*

TIME: *The Present; an Afternoon.*

SCENE—A private parlor in the apartment occupied by MRS. FITZGERALD and MISS SEYMOUR in one of the fashionable hotels of the city. There is a door up center leading to a hall; to the right a door leading to bedrooms. Fireplace and clock on mantelpiece. Sofa in the corner. To the left, window, couch and desk with telephone over it. A round table in the middle of the room, on which are confusedly heaped up boxes, containing women's garments of every description: gloves, corsets, handkerchiefs, lingerie, etc.

As the curtain rises HERVEY is seen standing by the table and glancing over it. After a few seconds MRS. FITZGERALD enters from the door at the right.

MRS. FITZGERALD (*welcoming HERVEY with great cordiality*)

So glad to see you, Mr. Hervey. Lydia will be back soon. She wasn't expecting you, I am sure.

HERVEY (*reservedly*)

I telephoned her that I was coming.

MRS. FITZGERALD (*embarrassed*)

I am surprised. She didn't say anything to me.

HERVEY

When did she go out?

MRS. FITZGERALD

Just after luncheon.

HERVEY (*disappointed*)

Well—I came to say that my mother has arrived.

MRS. FITZGERALD (*showing great interest*)

Does Lydia know it?

HERVEY

She knows I have a good message.

MRS. FITZGERALD

How is your mother?

HERVEY

Very well, thanks. The dear old lady has stood the trip splendidly—nearly a thousand miles, you know.

MRS. FITZGERALD

The pleasure of joining a beloved son under the circumstances has overcome the fatigue of the journey.

HERVEY (*solemnly*)

My mother will call this afternoon. I hope Lydia will be home.

MRS. FITZGERALD

Of course!

HERVEY (*superciliously*)

Where did she go?

MRS. FITZGERALD

I cannot tell exactly. She rushed out—for some errand, I suppose. We have been awfully busy this morning. (*Pointing to the boxes on the table.*) You see!

HERVEY (*glancing over the table*)

Is Lydia getting things at the convent?

MRS. FITZGERALD

The whole trousseau will be made by the nuns, according to your advice.

HERVEY (*sententiously*)

Lydia will save money; and money saved is money earned, you know.

MRS. FITZGERALD

Exactly.

HERVEY (*gravely*)

Lydia must understand and bear that in mind. She has been accustomed to be a spendthrift. She got it from her father.

MRS. FITZGERALD

Since he died and Lydia came to me, she has become the quietest girl that ever lived.

HERVEY

You've been a blessing to her, Mrs. Fitzgerald.

MRS. FITZGERALD

Cousin Lydia deserves all my attentions. I feel I never do enough for her. She is a true, square, loyal heart, the living picture of her mother. Lyd-

ia's greatest misfortune has been to have been left motherless when still a child.

HERVEY (*picking up a sheet of paper from the table*)

Is this the list of the trousseau?

MRS. FITZGERALD

Reduced to the minimum, according to your wishes.

HERVEY (*glancing over the paper*)

Twelve nightgowns! Couldn't this item be cut down to half?

MRS. FITZGERALD (*with a smile*)

Not very well, Mr. Hervey.

HERVEY

Two dozen handkerchiefs! Is she subject to frequent attacks of cold? Six corsets! Does she wear more than one corset at a time?

MRS. FITZGERALD (*gently taking the list out of his hands*)

My dear man, you ought not to complain at having a bride supplied with decent clothes. The trousseau goes to your home, after all.

HERVEY (*solemnly*)

It is a question of principle, Mrs. Fitzgerald. Principles are the first requisite in matrimonial happiness.

(LYDIA *walks in from the door in the center with a preoccupied, anxious look; seeing HERVEY, she dissimulates*)

LYDIA (*going to HERVEY very uneasily*)

Pardon me, Walter, if I've kept you waiting.

HERVEY (*taking her hands and fixing his eyes on hers*)

What is it, Lydia?

LYDIA (*gently freeing herself from him and going to the mirror over the mantelpiece to take off her hat, with an effort to appear calm*)

Nothing. I am simply dead tired.

MRS. FITZGERALD (*who has discovered LYDIA's anxiety, trying to help her out*).

Back from the convent?

LYDIA (*placing her hat on the mantelpiece and fixing her hair*)

Of course, Cousin Kate.

MRS. FITZGERALD

You know—Mrs. Hervey has arrived.

LYDIA (*turning quickly to HERVEY*)

Indeed? (*Going to him.*) When?

HERVEY

Half an hour ago. I took her home and came straight here.

LYDIA (*sitting on the couch*)

You didn't expect her today, did you?

HERVEY (*sitting by her*)

I received a wire just in time to hurry to the station.

LYDIA (*with a smile*)

Did you have time to speak of me?

HERVEY

We spoke only of you.

LYDIA

Does she approve our plans?

HERVEY

Every one of them. She will be here this afternoon to meet you. The announcement of our engagement will follow immediately.

LYDIA

I am anxious to meet her, though I feel quite nervous—

HERVEY

Why?

LYDIA

I fancy her a very dignified lady, with loving but quite severe eyes—

HERVEY (*with a paternal smile*)

Very severe.

LYDIA

A sweet mouth—but a strong chin—

HERVEY

Yes, quite strong!

LYDIA (*brighly*)

And beautiful white hair, parted in the middle. There is your mother, I feel sure.

HERVEY (*rising*)

I will tell her—

(LYDIA and MRS. FITZGERALD *rise*)

MRS. FITZGERALD (*to HERVEY*)

Are you going?

HERVEY (*extending his hand to MRS. FITZGERALD*)

I must go down to my office just for a while. I will return soon. (*Going up stage with LYDIA.*) I wish you would put on that plain blue gown—

LYDIA

That old-fashioned, dull thing? I look like a college girl in it!

HERVEY

Mother will like it better, I know. And I do, too.

LYDIA

Don't say that.

HERVEY (*solemnly*)

There are attractions in the modest way a woman may dress far above the vain display of extravagant gowns. Besides, one saves money.

LYDIA

You are constantly talking of saving money. Money is not everything.

HERVEY (*sententiously*)

No. But everything is money.

LYDIA (*smiling*)

Everything but one.

HERVEY

What is that?

LYDIA (*going out*)

One's heart.

(HERVEY stands a moment, then goes out. MRS. FITZGERALD has remained by the table looking after them. A pause.)

LYDIA (*rushing in, in a low, excited voice*)

You did well not to leave me alone with him. (*Falling on a chair by the table exhausted.*) It was such a strain to be bright and jovial with him!

MRS. FITZGERALD

For heaven's sake, what has happened?

LYDIA (*hesitatingly*)

It is—well—it is Jim.

MRS. FITZGERALD (*utterly surprised*)

Jim Gordon?

LYDIA

Jim has been writing me for the last two weeks, begging the favor of a last interview.

MRS. FITZGERALD

How did he dare?

LYDIA

I have been strong enough not to acknowledge even the receipt of his letters.

MRS. FITZGERALD

Of course!

LYDIA (*with emphasis*)

You will understand how much I have suffered for that.

MRS. FITZGERALD

Well?

LYDIA (*more excited*)

After all, he loves me. And I—I certainly did love him.

MRS. FITZGERALD (*reproachfully*)

Lydia! You promised yourself and me to be done with him forever!

LYDIA (*rising and excitedly pacing the room*)

Yes, yes, yes! I promised! I am done with the whole world! I am so tired of it all!

MRS. FITZGERALD (*sternly*)

Have you seen him?

LYDIA

No. He had just left.

MRS. FITZGERALD

Where?

LYDIA

The Waldorf.

MRS. FITZGERALD (*controlling her indignation with determination*)

Lydia, you are no longer a child. You must know what you are doing. Do you want to break off everything with Mr. Hervey?

LYDIA (*sinking on the couch*)

Oh, don't question me, I pray.

MRS. FITZGERALD (*sternly and coldly*)

Of course you have to consider what this match is to you. You are financially ruined, and my means are so small that I couldn't possibly provide for you any longer. Our compromise was that you were to settle and look for a responsible man to marry.

LYDIA (*who has followed MRS. FITZGERALD'S speech, her elbows on her knees, her hands tight together, her eyes fixedly staring at the floor before her.*)

Be assured—I will marry Mr. Hervey.

MRS. FITZGERALD (*with force*)

Then you must never attempt to see Mr. Gordon again.

LYDIA (*rising, with determination*)

Cousin Kate, with all my gratitude and devotion to you, allow me to say that in such a matter I claim to be the only judge.

MRS. FITZGERALD

As far as you keep your word.

LYDIA

I always kept my word with you strictly. From the very day you were good enough to take me with you I severed myself from all connections of the past. But I couldn't tear my heart from my body. Jim and I have been devoted to each other for years. He was the only young man visiting my father's home who had sense. Un-

fortunately, he had no means to support me; otherwise he would have married me, and made me the happiest woman on earth. (*Moved, throwing her arms around MRS. FITZGERALD'S neck.*) Understand me! Help me!

(*A bell rings. LYDIA rushes to the telephone and takes down the receiver.*)

LYDIA

Yes. (*Pause.*) Ask him up. (*Hangs up the receiver and goes to MRS. FITZGERALD hesitatingly.*) Jim is calling.

MRS. FITZGERALD (*angrily*)

You mustn't see him.

LYDIA (*smilingly*)

Too late; he is on his way up here now.

MRS. FITZGERALD (*rushing to the telephone*)

I will make him stop!

LYDIA (*detaining her*)

No, Cousin Kate, you sha'n't do that.

MRS. FITZGERALD (*angrily*)

Mr. Hervey may be back any minute!

LYDIA (*calmly*)

I don't care.

MRS. FITZGERALD (*excitedly*)

Lydia! I am done with you!

(*Goes out indignantly at the right.*)

LYDIA goes to the table, arranges the boxes on it abstractedly, then walks to the mantelpiece, looks at herself in the mirror and fixes her hair, showing nervousness in all her movements. After a moment JIM GORDON appears in the doorway in the center.)

JIM (*rushing to LYDIA*)

Lydia!

LYDIA (*standing by the mantelpiece, turning to JIM and trying to appear calm and reserved.*)

You are giving me great trouble.

JIM (*taking her hand*)

You have been at the Waldorf! I just missed you! It was so good of you!

LYDIA (*withdrawing her hand from his grip*)

I was crazy! (*raising her eyes to him.*) What is it?

JIM (*in great suspense, staring at her*)

Are you really going to marry Mr. Hervey?

LYDIA (*with an effort, standing his look*)

Yes.

JIM (*with emotion*)

Is it serious? I mean, has everything been fully considered and settled?

LYDIA

Fully.

JIM (*looking around*). You are engaged—and there isn't a single flower in your room!

LYDIA (*dissimulating*)

But what do you want from me?

JIM

Lydia, would you give me a last chance? (*LYDIA looks into his eyes.*) Suppose my circumstances were all changed—suppose I had independent means and could offer you quite a comfortable life? Would you be willing to leave Mr. Hervey for me?

LYDIA (*brightening*)

Jim, have you been successful? Are you in business?

JIM

I'll tell you all.

LYDIA (*quite excited, taking him to the couch and making him sit by her*)

Yes, you must. I want to hear everything. What are you doing?

JIM

Since the day we separated I made up my mind to throw myself into the battle of life and win.

LYDIA (*following every word with great eagerness, pressing him to go on*)

Yes—

JIM

Do you remember that mournful afternoon when I came to say good-bye to you? Your father had died and left you homeless. His wretched creditors were seizing everything in the house. You said to me: "Jimmy, make money, plenty of it! The world is nasty with the penniless. Have money and the world will be yours." Do you remember that, Lydia?

LYDIA (*with a sad smile*)

Yes.

JIM

Since that day, I purposed to hold by the money, not for its own sake, of course, but for the power which it gives among men.

LYDIA (*impatiently*)

Yes— Well?—

JIM

I was disposed to work hard, restlessly, provided I had a chance to make a fortune. Lydia, my dear, it is not true that will is power. I had the will of lifting the whole earth in my arms. Yet I passed through numberless delusions. I don't want to grieve you with my experiences. When I found that my bank account was reduced to one thousand dollars, and that this represented all my patrimony, I took the desperate resolution to stake it on the stock market.

LYDIA (*reproachfully*)

Oh, Jim!

JIM

I made eighteen thousand dollars in less than a month.

LYDIA (*brightening*)

Eighteen thousand dollars! What have you done with it?

JIM

I kept on gambling, of course. I thought I was going to conquer Wall Street and make my dear Lydia the wife of a millionaire.

LYDIA (*with impatience*)

Well?

JIM

Well, I began to lose and lose and lose!

LYDIA (*anxiously*)

Did you lose everything?

JIM

No, Lydia. When thirteen thousand dollars were gone I stopped speculating in the market. For the last two weeks I have been wondering what I could do with my five thousand.

LYDIA

Is that all you have now?

JIM

Yes, but a fortune of one hundred thousand dollars will come into my grasp within a very short while.

LYDIA (*amazed*)

One hundred thousand dollars!

JIM

I held to my purpose to venture all for the sake of you. Time was getting short. Well, the die is cast now. The other day I laid my five thousand on Sunbeam.

LYDIA

Sunbeam? What is it?

JIM

You never heard of him, of course. Nobody knew him before. But he will make a hit in Chicago today.

LYDIA

In Chicago!

JIM (*continuing, with great emphasis*)

I had a sure tip on him. I got him at twenty to one. The best now is even money. On look, form and breeding Sunbeam has every chance to be the great winner of the day.

LYDIA

You put all your money on a horse! But if you lose—

JIM

If I lose—I will lose you, too. Then I will have nothing left to hope.

LYDIA (*in wild agitation*)

Jim!

JIM (*brightening and taking her hand very tenderly*)

Don't worry; Sunbeam will come in first, I am sure. And you—you, Lydia, dear—will you marry me then?

LYDIA (*holding his hand tenderly*)

You have put me in a feverish excitement!

JIM

Will you marry me, Lydia?

LYDIA (*throwing her arms round his neck*)

Your wishes are mine.

JIM (*holding her in his arms*)

Lydia, Lydia, my love! (*They remain fondly in each other's arms for a while. The clock strikes four. JIM glances at the clock with sudden anxiety.*) The horses must be off now! (*Rising and pointing excitedly to the telephone on the desk.*) May I use the telephone?

LYDIA (*rising*)

Yes, certainly.

JIM

(*Goes to the desk and takes the telephone in his hands, standing in the act of telephoning, looking at LYDIA.*)

Lydia—I feel quite excited!

LYDIA (*going to him, anxiously*)

I do, too.

JIM (*with a little smile*)

Look how my hands shake! Isn't it funny?

LYDIA (*with an effort to control her emotion*)

Our anxiety will be over soon.

JIM

Of course— (*About to telephone—the telephone rings. Handing receiver to LYDIA.*) You will have to answer this. (*The telephone keeps on ringing.*)

LYDIA (*holding the receiver and speaking at the telephone*)

Who is it? (*Pause; turning to JIM, disappointed.*) Mr. Hervey is downstairs.

JIM

Damn—

LYDIA

What shall I do?

JIM

Let him come up. I—I will go and get the good news and hurry back to you.

LYDIA

Yes, Jim. (*Speaking at the telephone.*) Ask Mr. Hervey to come up, please. (*Replacing the telephone on the table. To JIM.*) Don't be long.

JIM

I won't; you may be sure of that. (*Joyfully.*) And then we shall kick the old man out of the place—shall we not?

LYDIA

We'll do anything you wish.

JIM (*extending his hand to her*)

Au revoir, Lydia.

LYDIA

(*Taking his hand nervously and offering her lips for a kiss*)

Jim!

JIM (*kissing her*)

Lydia, my dear!

(*Goes out hurriedly at center door, as if he could control his feelings no longer. LYDIA, in the doorway looks after him for a while, then, as if exhausted by her emotion, enters and sinks on a chair by the door, bursting into low, uncontrollable sobs. With a great effort she recovers, rises and walks unsteadily to the table. HERVEY enters at center door.*)

LYDIA (*leaning over the table, picking up the first garment at hand to dry her eyes and forcing herself to assume a natural tone of voice.*)

It is you, Walter?

HERVEY (*going to her, with a tone of voice slightly reproachful*)

You haven't changed your frock yet!

My mother will be here soon.

LYDIA (*busying herself over her trousseau so as to assume a countenance*)

I was busy on my trousseau. You see— (*Pause.*) Anything new?

HERVEY (*standing behind her*)

People complain that business is dull. But we are quite busy in our office.

LYDIA (*hesitatingly*)

Is there anybody there who is interested in horse races?

HERVEY (*surprised*)

Horse races! I've never been to a race track in all my life!

LYDIA

Of course you haven't! Do any of your partners know anything about it?

HERVEY (*solemnly*)

My partners are well ordered, matter-of-fact persons, who have no time to waste on such things.

LYDIA (*calling aloud, while she continues to busy herself over the trousseau*)

Cousin Kate!

MRS. FITZGERALD (*from within*)

Yes.

LYDIA

Mr. Hervey is here.

HERVEY (*placing himself in front of LYDIA*)

Why are you asking me about the races?

LYDIA (*without looking at him*)

I had a tip on a horse.

HERVEY (*surprised*)

A tip!

MRS. FITZGERALD (*entering from the door at the right and catching HERVEY's words, jokingly*)

A tip for me? I need a good one very badly, Mr. Hervey!

HERVEY (*to MRS. FITZGERALD, severely*)

Do you gamble on horses, Mrs. Fitzgerald?

MRS. FITZGERALD (*surprised*)

I? Certainly not!

HERVEY (*looking at LYDIA*)

I am afraid Lydia does.

MRS. FITZGERALD (*to HERVEY*)

Lydia? (*To LYDIA.*) I never heard of such a thing before.

LYDIA (*raising her head, staring va-*

cantly before her and almost unconsciously repeating JIM's words, slowly) Sunbeam will make a hit today.

HERVEY (*surprised*)

What is it?

(MRS. FITZGERALD looks at LYDIA without understanding her)

LYDIA (*continuing as above*)

On looks, form and breeding Sunbeam has every chance to win.

HERVEY (*sternly*)

How much did you bet?

LYDIA (*as if recalled to herself by HERVEY's question, looking at him*)

How much? (*Looking fixedly at him.*)

Five thousand dollars! (*Goes to the desk.*)

MRS. FITZGERALD (*bursting into laughter*)

Ah, ah, ah! Can't you see it? Lydia is making fun of us.

HERVEY (*facing LYDIA*)

What's the joke?

LYDIA (*holding the receiver and answering HERVEY quite absently*)

There is no joke. It is quite serious. (*Speaking through the telephone.*) Have you any information on the racing events of today in Chicago?

HERVEY (*angrily, turning to MRS. FITZGERALD*)

What do you think of that, Mrs. Fitzgerald?

MRS. FITZGERALD

But, Mr. Hervey, you know, Lydia hasn't any money!

HERVEY

Money has nothing to do with it. She might have gambled five cents, and I would strongly object to it just the same. It is a question of principle.

LYDIA (*speaking at the telephone*)

Yes—I am holding the wire; thank you.

HERVEY

It is bad enough for men. But to think, that a girl—the girl I am going to marry—has such habits!

LYDIA (*anxiously, as above*)

Yes.

HERVEY (*continuing, to MRS. FITZGERALD, pointing to LYDIA*)

What would my mother say to see Lydia like that—

LYDIA (*as above*)

Have you got the result of the fourth race?

HERVEY (*as above*)

Hanging over the telephone, anxiously waiting the event of a gambling chance!

LYDIA (*excitedly, speaking through the telephone*)

What is it? (*Pause.*) I mean the fourth race. (*Pause.*) Who was first? (*Breathlessly.*) Say it again! (*With a cry of joy.*) Ah! Sunbeam! (*Hangs up the receiver, and hurrying to MRS. FITZGERALD, throws her arms around her neck.*) Cousin Kate—I love you so! Sunbeam has won! Sunbeam!

MRS. FITZGERALD (*freeing herself from LYDIA, severely*)

But what's the matter with you?

HERVEY (*sternly, to LYDIA*)

How much did you bet?

LYDIA (*turning to HERVEY, watching him for a while, then bursting into loud laughter*)

I told you, old man—five thousand dollars!

HERVEY (*drily, to LYDIA*)

You carry your joke too far.

LYDIA (*rushing back to the telephone, joyfully*)

We have one hundred thousand dollars now! (*Looks over the telephone book; to MRS. FITZGERALD.*) What's Jim's telephone number?

HERVEY (*going to LYDIA*)

Jim? Who is Jim?

LYDIA (*as above, most naturally*)

Jim Gordon—you know.

HERVEY (*indignantly*)

Jim Gordon? Have you anything to do with that good-for-nothing young man?

LYDIA (*throwing down the telephone book and going angrily to HERVEY*)

Good for nothing? Jim Gordon is a dear friend of mine, the best of all, and I won't allow anyone to speak unkindly of him.

MRS. FITZGERALD

Lydia!

HERVEY (*to MRS. FITZGERALD, with composure*)

Let her talk. This is a new revelation to me—that may be of some value in the future.

LYDIA (*facing HERVEY, with a provoking smile*)

Whose future, pray?

MRS. FITZGERALD (*sternly*)

Lydia! I must have a talk with Mr. Hervey. Go to your room.

LYDIA (*laughingly*)

Go to my room? You had better take Mr. Hervey into yours. (*Throwing some of her trousseau garments up in the air.*) And this cheap stuff, too!

MRS. FITZGERALD (*to HERVEY*)

She is out of her mind. She doesn't know what she is talking about.

LYDIA (*going up stage*)

You wait for Jim. He will tell you.

MRS. FITZGERALD (*strongly*)

You are not to see him—that's settled.

LYDIA (*at the center door turning to MRS. FITZGERALD*)

Indeed! (*Throwing the door wide open.*) Here he is! (*JIM enters carrying a letter in his hand. He seems very much disturbed, but LYDIA doesn't notice it. Throwing her arms around him, joyfully.*) Jim! I am so happy!

JIM (*confused, gently freeing himself and turning to MRS. FITZGERALD*)

I beg your pardon. If I intrude—

LYDIA (*gazing at JIM*)

Intrude? Don't you know? Sunbeam was first!

JIM (*hesitatingly*)

I haven't told you yet—that—I sent my cheque for five thousand dollars to Frank Marvel in Chicago—

LYDIA (*anxiously*)

What for?

JIM

To place the money among the different bookmakers there—

LYDIA

Well?

JIM (*continuing as above*)

So as to avoid any excitement in the betting ring here in New York and so lower the odds.

LYDIA (*gazing at him*)

You look so depressed—what has happened? Anything wrong with the cheque?

JIM

Oh, no—the cheque was all right.

LYDIA (*anxiously*)

What, then?

JIM (*hesitatingly*)

My man in Chicago refused to bet.

HERVEY (*sententiously, with a sarcastic smile, looking up at JIM*)

Well done!

(JIM turns angrily to HERVEY.)

LYDIA (*to JIM, bewildered*)

He refused to bet? But why?

JIM (*handing the letter to LYDIA*)

Here is his letter. He claims he has reformed—he doesn't gamble any more and couldn't do it for me.

(LYDIA remains up stage glancing over the letter.)

HERVEY (*as above*)

Nice fellow!

JIM (*going to HERVEY, provokingly*)

Just an old fool like you!

HERVEY (*indignantly*)

Be careful what you say, Mr. Gordon.

JIM (*facing him*)

You may take Lydia from me, but—
MRS. FITZGERALD (*interfering, to JIM*)

You sha'n't make trouble. Leave us, and never attempt to come here again.

JIM (*after a fierce look at HERVEY, to MRS. FITZGERALD*)

I'll go. I will make no trouble. But you shouldn't be so hard on me, Mrs. Fitzgerald. You have a heart, and you know—I love her. (*Moved, but trying to control himself, turning and walking up stage.*) Good-bye, Lydia. (*Rushes to the door.*)

LYDIA (*holding out the letter to JIM*)

Here is your letter, Jim. And there is your cheque.

JIM (*in the doorway, sadly*)

What do I care? It is all over with me.

LYDIA

All over—with five thousand dollars? There may still be five thousand chances in life for us—

JIM (*looking amazed at her*)

Lydia!

LYDIA (*opening her arms to him*)

Don't you understand, you naughty boy?

(JIM takes her in his arms. They embrace fondly. MRS. FITZGERALD and HERVEY look at them dumfounded.)

CURTAIN

THE GAMESTER

By KENDRICK SCOFIELD

"SHE gambles," Kittrington announced, taking up the thread of an interrupted conversation. Randall withdrew his gaze from the passing show which he was watching from the windows of the club and gave attention.

"Bridge, poker or horses?"

"Higher stakes than those," Kittrington answered. "Game little body, though. She plays against what she might call the hypercritical and hypocritical code of convention, and she puts her reputation in the game at table stakes."

"Go on," commanded Randall interestedly.

"Her luck is astounding. She always wins. There was Maitland; he didn't give her credit. Now he's in Samoa, nursing the stings of a verbal lashing administered by Miss Nathalie in the crowded foyer of a Long Branch hotel. Folks made it too hot for him by their chaffing and he left."

"Why?"

"Oh, as she puts it," Kittrington explained, "he 'presumed too much' when she accepted a sporting proposition to make a two days' automobile run with him unchaperoned. Then there was Leyton. Mexico got him, and there were others."

Randall blew several clouds of panetela fragrance into the air and stretched his legs widely.

"There was a pitcher once—" he observed with seeming irrelevance. "It went to the well too often; and I guess you remember what happened to the little kitten who raked the chestnuts from the coals for an old simian schemer."

Randall's companion nodded.

"A dotty young fool was engaged to her some three years ago," Kittrington said. "He talked a lot of unconventional nonsense into her head and she began. But he didn't marry her."

Randall leaned forward in his chair to catch every word as his companion went on:

"Now the worst part of it is that every man who thinks he knows women calls the piper, and he and Miss Nathalie proceed to have a giddy, innocent dance. Some day she'll have to settle the account. As to the fable of the kitten, one never notices blisters on the digits of a cook, but won't they be frightfully apparent upon the shapely fingers of Miss Nathalie Dale!"

The other man sat silent while an inch of ash grew on his cigar.

"So that's the way you look upon her: Nathalie Dale—gamester!" Randall mused. "You are all wrong. I have known the little woman for years. It is not prudery nor convention which she opposes. She is playing against none of those little puerile matters which count only in the pitifully finite things of life. She is no analyst—she's an experimentalist; and because she takes a long chance you call her Gamester. I tell you, you are wrong!"

"Perhaps you are right," Kittrington smiled indulgently.

Randall motioned the waiter for his hat and cane. Then he raised his half-emptied glass.

"Call her what you will, Kit; to me she is My Lady Caprice!"

II

At the Allstynes' midwinter charity ball Stephen Randall made his way among the guests in quest of her. Ten minutes of fruitless search left him stranded in the conservatory, an unlighted weed between his teeth. So he sat while the dancers killed two waltzes. Then a hand fell lightly upon his shoulder, and rising, he turned. A slight girl-woman looked straight into his eyes.

"So, after four years, the wanderer has returned," she greeted. "I heard that a Stephen Randall would be here tonight, and because I thought that it might be my old Steve I took the chance of keeping this part of the evening free."

"It was what Steve hoped you'd do," the man answered gravely. Then he smiled. "Shall I be guilty of bad taste, Nathalie, if I say it seems ages and ages since that night on the Virginia mountain?"

The girl's face sobered a little as the man went on:

"You said I was goaded by the sight of an unmended rent in an impossible pair of riding trousers, yearned for domesticity and asked you—"

The girl laid the ivory sticks of her fan across his lips.

"And he is still building air castles!" she laughed.

"The paramount beauty, my dear, in the construction of ethereal palaces is that their progress is never hindered by tradesmen's strikes."

"Are you really happy enough to be able to jest about your Spanish palaces?" the girl asked, marveling. "I have sought the ideal—only to have it broken."

"The fault is yours, then." Randall walked slowly back and forth near her chair before he sank into another. "Don't you know that ideals are as indestructible as the little rubber horse you used to play with as a child? Remember how the gilt used to wear off the saddle and bridle, and how the tail pulled out? But the old toy was always the same and a little dearer, perhaps."

"Yes, it was," the girl laughed. "I never connected ideals with rubber horses, though."

"They're much the same," Randall went on. "I've often found what I believed fulfilled my ideal, but nothing ever fully does that any more than the paint remains on rubber toys; yet what difference does it make if they do fall short? I simply hold to the standard."

The woman sighed. "I have always found something lacking, and have never made allowance for wear and tear," she said simply. "These people, for instance, know but one thing—a personal ideal. What they do not love they ignore. They play at charity, and their charity amounts only to giving away something for which they have no use, or in giving such balls as these where the display they make of their clothes brings value received."

For the first time Randall noticed that she wore a simple white frock.

"They play at virtue"—the girl was still speaking—"virtue through marriage, which gives them station, immunity from criticism, wealth. In a word, the Desirable is their goal. No God, no good, no bad, seems to exist for them. What is the ultimate?"

The man did not appear even decently surprised. He had been leading her to this.

"What is your answer?" he countered.

"I know no answer save that faith in myself must suffice. Yet is it possible that these people have found the answer?"

Randall thought that for a moment the girl's breathing quickened as she spoke again.

"That man through the door, for example, Pembroke—he is looking for me. A man of possible originality, either for good or bad—which? Nobody knows," and the girl moved her hand in deprecation.

Pembroke was making his way toward them, but paused under a large cluster of foliage. His evening attire was faultless.

"Kittrington calls him the 'Satyr,'" Randall whispered, bending closer to

her. "See how the green of the leaves touches his hair in an almost Bacchanitic wreath! One is tempted to peep beneath his clothes expecting to find the hair of a goat."

"When you are ready, Miss Dale," the Satyr called from his bay tree.

The girl turned to Randall for a moment.

"Come and see me tomorrow. The Woodley, at three," she invited.

III

THOSE who saw Nathalie Dale sitting beside Pembroke in his motor as it rolled down Connecticut Avenue shook their heads and were scandalized. They knew that the Satyr had a nymph of his own at home, and that, instead of palliating matters, her age and avoirdupois made matters all the worse.

The car had progressed not many blocks before Pembroke abruptly abandoned his cynical review of the evening by asking: "Do you mind if I stop by the house for a moment? It's on our way home, you know, and I'm just a bit worried, for my wife left the ball feeling a little out of sorts."

The limousine wheeled into the driveway of the Satyr's Massachusetts Avenue home, and the girl waited while he went inside. When he returned, a cast of worry overspread his features.

"Would you mind very much if I sent you home in the car? My wife isn't at all well, and I don't like to leave her to the maid's care," he apologized.

She placed her hand upon his shoulder and stepped lightly from the machine.

"If there is a woman's work to be done I will do it," she declared, and unquestioningly preceded the man into the house, not seeing that he hesitated for a moment with the chain at the door.

Thinking of nothing but a woman in distress, she followed him up the stairs, and while he held open a door she crossed into an apartment where silver-laden dressing tables bespoke feminine occupancy.

Nathalie stepped near the curtained bed, and as she drew aside the hangings a key clicked trap-like in the door behind her.

"Yes, my wife is ill," rolled from Pembroke's lips as he stepped close to her. "When she left Allstynes' she went to her mother's. Yet my estimate of you was not amiss when I planned this little visit. I knew you would be too game to leave another woman to a maid's care, even in the teeth of a seeming impropriety."

While she stood silent he calmly snipped the end from a cigar and planted it between fanglike teeth around which his heavy beard curled.

Nathalie put the distance of the room between them and gazed at him steadily.

"Your eyes do not show a bit of fear," he said impersonally, "and yet this is no hotel foyer where you can tongue-lash me into submission. Poor Maitland!" and he laughed unpleasantly.

Nervously the girl fingered the scarf at her throat.

"Why have you done this?" she demanded. "Other men have merely sought to accept opportunities which they believed I gave them. You have made your opportunity to—"

"—observe Miss Nathalie Dale—Gamester," he supplied, "when she plays a hand without the benefit of a draw. To destroy, if you please, belief in her infallible prowess when dealing with men." Pembroke's voice was implacable as he proceeded without emphasis:

"Other men awaited their opportunities, and were worsted. I made my opportunity, as you say. I may take Miss Nathalie Dale in my arms. May kiss her! The potentiality is mine, and the power."

The girl shuddered, but the tremor passed and she stood straight before him, the old dancing light of experiment in her eyes.

"Well—observe me. This is the bet I make on the hand I hold. Potentiality in a strong man seeks no surfeit—"

She crossed to his side. Slowly she

tapped his shoulder with her fan, as one might bait a caged beast.

"I cannot better the cards I hold," she taunted, "yet I believe they are 'good.'"

"Are they?"

The Satyr took a step toward her. Again the girl shrank from him.

"My God! Are you laughing at me?"

"Inwardly, I am convulsed," the Satyr chaffed, as he turned from her with a shrug of his great shoulders and reached for a book.

From a little desk across the room the nicked gleam of a telephone beckoned the woman. In an instant she was beside it, the receiver was pressed to her ear, and the voice of the operator was insistently urging, "Number, please? Number?"

"I wouldn't," advised the Satyr, without glancing up from his book. "It would look so much like a quitter's trick."

Wearily she hung up the receiver and sank into a chair.

Minute by minute the clock on the mantel held by the little Watteau shepherdess ticked busily into tomorrow. Second by second its ceaseless monotony wore away the girl's faith in herself.

When the hands pointed to the hour Pembroke rose, methodically closed the book, marking the page, and courteously, mockingly, held open the door.

The opalescent glow of the hall lamp fell impartially upon the leer of the Satyr and on the listless face of a pixie, as Nathalie Dale stumbled down the steps.

IV

Fog had settled when she staggered her way out. The lights of the Satyr's car glinted and winked sardonically as it stood waiting, but she passed the drowsy chauffeur unheeding. Neither did she heed the cab drawn up at the corner nor the man who paced back and forth in the murky gleam of the street light. Indeed, she would have passed him, too, had not his tall figure blocked her path.

"Is it home, Nathalie?"

"Steve! Then you saw?"

"Of course; else I should not be waiting here. I was driving home."

She was too dazed to question the pressure of his hand upon her arm guiding her to the cab, for the scheme of Nathalie Dale's cosmos was sadly disarranged. She was too much shaken by the sudden revelation of what this new complication might mean to her to do more than stare dumbly out into the night, as the cab rolled away, past row after row of residences and finally turned into Sixteenth Street.

As from a great way off she heard Randall's voice, and was annoyed that he was talking at random on trivial topics.

"You have not asked me how I happened to be here," she interrupted defiantly.

"Nathalie, dear, I don't know; neither am I going to ask," the man switched the conversation to reply. "But, as I was saying, Kittrington and Miss—"

"Steve, you must listen. Had you asked me, I should, no doubt, have told you that it didn't concern you, but—"

"Nathalie and Steve were pals once," the man reminded her. "You used to tell me all your worries, didn't you? Well, tell me just as much of them now as you care to have me know; maybe I can help some."

While the girl sat silent the lights of ten blocks passed. Now and then, when a ray of light found its way into the cab, Randall could see that tears trembled in her eyes.

"Boy, I began as all children do," she began, "with faith in my Sunday school teacher and the superintendent. Modestly and reverently they accepted that faith and passed it on to God, who, they told me, was a great way off. I believed that He would answer my prayers and punish me if I transgressed."

"There came a time when my prayer was that my plea be answered then, for a life very dear to me, Steve, was in the balance. That life went out, and with it, boy—I think—went my belief in a Supreme Good."

Her voice was breaking and the words came disjointedly until the pressure of Randall's hand upon her arm encouraged her.

"The Supreme Good is not always humanly tangible, little woman."

Her look thanked him, and she continued:

"Then, because I demanded something to sustain me, I discovered a hitherto unrecognized asset—faith in myself. Do you realize what a life buoy that was to a drifting girl?"

"I believe I do, Nathalie," the man replied. "I, too, have sailed without a rudder."

"But I hadn't gained anchorage even then, for I met men—you know the class—who think a woman is of 'less aureate clay.' Again and again I held my own with them by that same bulwark. But beneath it all I have known that I was missing the something which is best in life, and I have groped."

She moved her hands aimlessly through the dusk of the cab until Randall's strong fingers closed over them. So they sat while she mercilessly recounted her awakening in the house of the Satyr.

"Tonight even my faith was stripped from me."

Randall nodded grimly.

"I'll reckon with Pembroke," he muttered.

"And tonight, Steve, you come to me from a yesterday I thought was dead. You speak no word of faith, yet you give me that which I sought and needed unconsciously—another's belief in me."

Her voice was choked in the sobs she could not restrain, and Randall's arms gently overcame her resistance until the strands of her hair seemed to brush his face in the mute appeal Nathalie Dale would not voice.

"You're making a great deal too much out of the ordinary things of life, little woman," he said. "You have tried to regulate your life beyond the line where philosophy, rule and precedent meet and are vanquished by the innate human in us all, dear. A man or a woman had better leave the mind's Never-Never Land a largely unexplored region."

Nathalie drew his cheek closer to her own.

"May I come before three tomorrow?" the man whispered. "I should like to drive you to Forest Glen. There is a little church in the woods, ever so many decades old, and—"

"Is ten o'clock too late," the girl questioned, "for poor Nathalie Dale to take her last chance?"



PRODIGAL

By MARIE C. OEMLER

I LAVISHED on each light love what should have graced the right love,
 I sought the lips of Pleasure, and met the mouth of Shame;
 I followed every new love—and so I lost the true love;
 I could not hold the real love, the one love, when it came!

TWO FRENCH WORDS

By JACQUES WILMARTH

SHE said but, "*On dit*." It was night in the passage between the geranium beds and the magnolias. Had I not heard aright? The enunciation was quite distinct. The first word was "*On*"—of that I was certain. "*Dit*" was the other.

This and the drooping of two eyelids, and she was gone. The third dance was beginning. I had given it to the Boston girl who told me in the afternoon that dancing was the gentle art of permitting a man to hold you in his arms for so many minutes while the world looked on. I must hurry—but "*on dit*" . . .

"William, how long have we been in this club?"

I was aimlessly looking into the Avenue. Still, not aimlessly, for I was averaging the number of motors that passed in, say, a minute.

"Eh?" I replied, and then absent-mindedly: "Nineteen, I believe. Why do you ask?"

"Here is a curious story," he said. "It dates back to the year we came here, and a part of it is strangely like an incident that perhaps you will recollect. Let me read you this portion. 'They Say,' is its title, and it is written by a 'Judith Foster.' I assume that is a *nom de plume*, for the subtitle is, 'A Happening of Mine.' Listen:

"I had known him as a child, but the years passed, as the years have that peculiarity, and now we met. I was twenty-two. All descriptions of girlhood are prosaic and seldom exact. He was the most superb man I knew.

"The first four days were gloriously filled with every amusement an ingenious Connecticut house party hostess could fashion. Scarce an hour without a novel happening

of cheer or comfort or delicious excitement. After polo, cribbage; before the races up the long incline on the rocks, sun baths on the glass-enclosed roof.

"The next day I received two telegrams. The second read: 'Meet me, in God's name, at Judd's at six.' It was signed 'Jimsy.'

"That Judd's road house, just around the turn from the post office, was a notorious rendezvous on the New York-New Haven road for trysts of affinities, chorus ladies, college boys and the like; that once in or out you were quite safe, but to be seen entering or leaving was walking straight into perdition; that it figured in innumerable fashionable divorces, how, oh, how was I to know? Jimsy wanted me! He had wired! I would go!

"Should I have foreseen that Mrs. Siddall was coming on the seven-thirty-one? Or that she would stop for letters—an unprecedented thing—when the Mud Road the other way out saves two miles from the station? And why didn't I wear a heavier veil? And why didn't I drive instead of walk? I am weary of whys. Why, indeed?

"Jimsy Siddall was a Freshman and the girl was a maid at Sporty's, just off the campus. The tale was the stereotyped one. It was his chum—of course—and I must help him to help his chum. And no one must know. We were going out. Jimsy had gone back a moment for his forgotten topcoat and I was standing in the doorway at seven-forty. A trap drove by, and it was not yet dark.

"I had had two dances. The third was the one I had waited four days for—the superb man. His sister called me. Wouldn't I ask him to let her have me through this dance? Wouldn't I come out with her in the garden? Wouldn't I know that *she* believed in me? Wouldn't I give her a word so that—Wouldn't I explain . . . We were in the passageway between the magnolias and the geraniums. She was a little in front as we passed the superb man. He walked on the lawn so as to give me more space.

"'*On dit*,' I said to him . . ."

He was reading on, but I heard only the voice of an unstilled conscience: "*On dit*"—"On dit"—"*On d*—"

THE CLEVER MRS. SALISBURY

By ANNE WARNER

"YES, that is she," Desswood said to his guest, as the nearer approach of the saddle horses rendered the absolute identification of the lady rider a possibility; "yes, that is Mrs. Salisbury—the clever Mrs. Salisbury."

The guest looked at the woman, so straightly set and so straightly made.

"Cecile Salisbury!" he exclaimed unconsciously aloud. "Why, she must be my age, and she looks like a girl!"

Desswood laughed.

"You talk heresy," he cried gaily. "Neither you nor she has any age. Time passes you by in the night and saves your share of his crowsfeet for less blessed mortals."

Sir Edward smiled. The woman on horseback was close in front of them now. He watched her eagerly. She looked toward them, smiled and bowed. Her escort was her groom, and in an instant both had passed by.

"I knew her thirty years ago," the older man said slowly as they moved on again. "She was clever then. And so she's gone on being clever ever since! Poor thing, how tired she must be getting!"

"Not she," said Desswood. "She's the cleverest woman in the land and she knows it. And the most popular, and she knows that, too. Why should she get tired under such circumstances?"

"Did you ever think," asked the General, "how, if people are interesting to the world, they must of necessity be infinitely more interesting themselves? If one could only know them as they are! If one might only get at the truth behind the mask! If one might only speak with the heart instead of with the

lips! If one might only meet Mrs. Salisbury when she didn't feel called upon to be clever!"

"But she's clever by nature," said Desswood; "she doesn't have to try. All her phrases twist themselves into epigrams without the faintest effort on her part."

The other shook his head slightly.

"I know what I'm talking about," he said, "and shall hope to have the rare fortune to encounter Mrs. Salisbury *herself* before I take the voyage out again."

"I don't know about Mrs. Salisbury *herself*," said Desswood, "but—unless she has a previous engagement elsewhere—I am quite positive that the clever Mrs. Salisbury will be one of every party which you may deign to honor with your presence. She is the most sought after woman in society, and the mystery to everyone is how she can hold on to her complexion and her figure and continue so everlastingly brilliant year after year."

"I'll ask her the very first chance I get," Sir Edward said quietly. "I should like to know myself."

"Tell me what she says, won't you?" asked Desswood, much amused.

"No, because that would scarcely be honorable. But I shall certainly ask her for my own personal satisfaction."

Cecile saw him the instant that he entered the *salon* that night.

"There, that is the same man," she said to the Baronne de Roquièrs. "Is he the General?"

"Yes, yes, certainly," said the Baronne hurriedly. "I will present him at once."

She left her friend and crossed to greet the stranger. Cecile's eyes followed her until she stood by Sir Edward's side, and then they rested upon him. He was certainly worth the gaze of feminine eyes, for he was quite as handsome at fifty as he had ever been in his younger days, and with the years and what they had brought him there had grown into his carriage a splendid dignity of command and certitude of bearing that carried its own private and personal power of attraction with it. The deep scar that came diagonally across his left temple and cheek did not mar the glance of his bright, keen eyes, and the tan that was more than brown—almost black, indeed—of his face and hands gave a curious fascination to his clean-cut Saxon features and to the fingers with which he twisted his dark mustache. Cecile caught the quiet look which came her way almost as soon as Madame de Roquiers addressed him, and then turned to the man on her left and went on speaking. After all, was she not the clever Mrs. Salisbury? And what man in the whole wide world could be anything but pleased at the prospect of meeting her? For her to be pleased over the meeting of any particular man would be quite another tale—a tale which she could never tell, not even if it came true.

Then Madame de Roquiers was before her and he was with Madame de Roquiers. The formal presentation took place. Cecile stood up; the man on her left faded away; Madame la Baronne faded away; there was only he—and she.

"I am truly absurd," the clever Mrs. Salisbury told herself hurriedly. "I am ancient and my hair has a lot of gray in it, and yet I am conscious of being most sillily happy. What does it all mean?"

"Let us go out of this," said the man in front of her. "There is a conservatory down that way somewhere. I'm sure that I can find it, for Roquiers took me there to smoke this afternoon. Let us go there and sit down. I've things I want to ask you."

Cecile put her hand upon the old rose

brocade and silver lace of her train and shook it out preparatory to following where he should dictate.

"There will be music soon, you know," she reminded him.

"Perhaps we shall come back then," he replied with a delightfully imperial *insouciance*, considering that the musicians were paid some hundreds of pounds to contribute to his honoring.

They went through the crowded rooms and down a staircase into the long green aisles of the palace of flowers. A few people had found their way there, but not many. He found a seat in a corner and seated her; then he found an iron chair painted white and dragged it to her side and seated himself.

"And now what is it?" she asked him, looking frankly up into the attentive interest of his face. "There were 'things,' I believe you said."

"Yes, and dreadfully impertinent they are, too," he confessed, swinging one knee across the other in a manner that suggested a lengthy conference, "but I'm always horribly blunt, don't you see—and I want to know."

"You shall know," she promised him. "To ask is to be told always in my case, and although I am frequently forced to tell them 'No'—not that I don't like men, but I like my own name better—still I promise to say 'Yes' to you. So be merciful and aim well the first time."

He smiled a very little.

"How do you do it?" he said then.

She looked quickly up into his face.

"Do what?"

"Keep your figure—I heard a man wondering today."

Her laughter rang out softly.

"Shall I tell you?"

"Yes, tell me."

"I twist myself into inconceivable positions for fifteen minutes every morning. As long as I do that I'm bound to remain neither more nor less. Don't ask me what the positions are, for God only knows, as I make it a point to bolt both doors. Go on; what next?"

Sir Edward drew heavily upon his mustache.

"I don't feel like a gentleman," he said—"and yet I've made up my mind to ask. You see, you ought to be a grandmother and—"

"And I'm not," she interrupted, laughing again. "I know it's awful, but, you see, I never had any children, and you — being a man — cannot imagine how difficult it is to become a grandmother when one hasn't any children. The obstacle is perfectly insurmountable, it appears. But I've been a great-godmother over and over again. Won't that help some?"

"It isn't the grandchildren," he said slowly—"it's your face. You see, you ought to look old and you don't. We were wondering about that, too."

Mrs. Salisbury laughed afresh.

"It's all my own," she said merrily. "I'll swear it on the Bible or wash it in the fountain—just as you please. I formed the cosmetic habit in my youth when a coat of powder was the only protection against the coats-of—of my friends. You understand."

He laughed in his turn.

"But all the other women look so built up," he said, "so white with some well placed red. How do you escape?"

"Massage," she told him promptly and seriously. "One hour every morning and half an hour every night. No wrinkle in the wide world can hold its own against it, and as I don't admire wrinkles I refuse to entertain them knowingly."

"But you have gray hair!" the man said tentatively.

"Of course I have gray hair! I wouldn't dye my hair any more than I would enamel my face or pad my figure. What next?"

"Seems to me we quarreled next—that man and I," said Sir Edward thoughtfully. "I said I should like to know the *real* Mrs. Salisbury better than the clever Mrs. Salisbury, and he insisted that there was but one. Which of us was right?"

She looked truly troubled.

"I don't know," she said, looking down at her fan; "it's years since I stopped to think."

"I wish you would stop and think a

bit about it now," he said earnestly. "I sha'n't be in town long, and before I go I should like to meet the real Mrs. Salisbury."

Her eyes filled with quick tears.

"Don't resurrect her," she said pleadingly. "Let her rest in peace. It's best."

He bent his gaze upon the trouble in her face.

"Let her come to life," he said. "I want to know her and to know her well. It will do her good, too. She has stirred tonight. Let her wake; let her rise; let her"—he paused an instant—"let her receive me tomorrow about four o'clock," he added.

"And the clever Mrs. Salisbury—" Cecile asked.

"Oh, let her be 'not at home.'"

A strain of music sounded afar. She rose. He rose. She walked toward the summoning chords. He put his hand upon her arm and bent his head until he saw her eyes.

"Well?" he asked.

"I will try," she whispered.

II

It was some weeks—not to say months—later, and still the General tarried and went not "out." When one is very great indeed such trifles as "leaves of absence" have no definite limit. Sir Edward stayed on and on and people talked and talked—some even going so far as to say that they never had guessed that *she* was "so clever."

But Mrs. Salisbury herself was impenetrable. Even the devotion of the season's lion did not appear to ruffle the smooth brilliancy of her sparkling pathway. There had been other reasons and other lions, and those other lions had also courted her. She was so secure upon the throne of her svelte form and unwaning loveliness that all the tongues of all the talkers never troubled her.

And her cleverness never faltered nor flagged. When someone with a purpose told her that the General was

rumored to be seeking a young wife she smiled delightfully. "Why not?" she said. "A young wife would soon come to his side." And then she told him what she had said before anyone else had a chance to. He smiled mirthlessly.

"Why do you say such things?" he asked. "The speech is unkind and in miserable taste. I wish that you would not."

He was sitting in her drawing-room, playing with the teaspoons on her tea tray. She laughed.

"But it was clever," she reminded him.

"And cruel," he reminded her. "You are very cruel often, and your lash and dagger are unbearably painful. Why will you do it? Why will you not turn from the false ideal and seek the truth? There is truth in the world, and it is truth that our hearts ache for—not a specious twisting of words."

She clasped her hands in her lap.

"But I am the 'clever Mrs. Salisbury,'" she said—"and I am nothing else. I have been clever so long that it is useless trying to change."

He frowned.

"Such weak, cowardly words!" he muttered.

She stood up and took in her hand a cigar jar fashioned out of an elephant's foot.

"Do smoke," she said, holding it out.

He shook his head without speaking.

"A cigarette, then?" She picked up the tray in her other hand and pressed it upon him.

"No, no," he exclaimed almost irritably and crossed his legs and folded his hands between his knees and glowered at the rug.

"If it isn't cigars and isn't cigarettes," she said, her tone tainted with raillery, "if it isn't cigars and isn't cigarettes, then what *do* you want?"

He frowned blackly.

"It is you that I want," he said curtly and coldly—"not you as you insist that you are, but you as you really are."

She gasped and sank suddenly down

upon the nearest seat. Many men had proposed to her, but never in such a way as this before.

"Me!" she said at last in unfeigned astonishment.

"Yes," he said, twisting his black mustache. "Now don't make an epigram," he added roughly, almost savagely.

Cecile was silent.

Then after a few seconds she spoke.

"Shall I *really* be in earnest and tell the truth?"

Some curious change passed behind the tan of his face; his lips drew into harder lines.

"If you can," he said.

"Oh, I can," she told him. "And I will," she added. "It will be horrid, but I can do it."

He changed the crossing of his knees and centered his whole attention upon her.

"Go on," he commanded.

"I am forty-nine years old."

"I know it."

"I know that you know it."

"Very well. What follows?"

"I couldn't stand your post at all, even supposing that I could stand you."

"It is I that am in question—not the post. Go on."

"I am old for a woman, while you are young for a man. You can marry where you will."

"Yes, many would doubtless be willing to come to my aid," he said bitterly. "It's worth marrying for."

"But not to me," she said proudly.

"The world has been so kind to me that no position can offer me an adequate exchange for my own title. Am I not the 'clever Mrs. Salisbury,' and are you not asking that I cease to reign on her throne?"

His face was very dark.

"Yes," he said, "that is what I ask. The clever Mrs. Salisbury has become so obnoxious to me that I could tie a stone about her neck and drown her with pleasure. I'm tired of proverbs turned topsy-turvy, of holy words twisted sacrilegiously, of innocent folk mercilessly impaled to amuse a

thoughtless crowd. The woman who has the ingenuity to sin so continually must have an equal power for good. I'd give half my remaining years for the companionship of that woman, but if I can only have her linked to her most disreputable bad angel I don't want her at all."

She grew a little white about the lips.

"You are rude," she said.

"I am very much in earnest," he said.

Then both were silent for some time.

"What leads you to fancy that I am other than what I appear to be?" she asked at last.

"Your eyes—your beautiful eyes."

The lids dropped quickly over them as he spoke. He sprang to his feet and approached her.

"Cecile," he stammered hastily—"not now—but in a day or two. Think it over well. Choose the better part. I'll resign from the service and we'll wander away, we two—and—and—"

His hand was on her shoulder.

The tears stole out from between her lashes.

"Oh, leave me," she sobbed. "I'm so ugly when I cry."

So he went.

III

It was the second morning after—in the park—in one of the side paths. Heaven knows how it befell, but as Mrs. Salisbury took the brisk walk which, rain or shine, was part of her every day, she saw him approaching with his long swinging step and his eyes bent her way.

She stopped short and he joined her.

"How is the 'clever Mrs. Salisbury?'" he asked, smiling.

"She's dead," said Cecile. "She died last night in a fearful agony of regret and repentance."

The General's face became radiant.

"Really!" he cried. "And how do you come by the news?"

"Because I am her sole survivor."

"Ah! That sounds as though she left you all that she possessed. Did she?"

"She possessed only one thing that I wanted," Cecile said, trying hard not to laugh.

"And that was—"

"You."

Sir Edward stopped short.

"Oh!" he said with a species of violence. "Why *must* we remember that we are middle-aged?"

She looked severely at him.

"I will not make a joke of it," she said kindly.

"But are you positive that you have not come in for *any* of her abominable brains?"

She began to smile.

"You can take a pen and dash them out of the will," she suggested.

The shrubbery was very thick about the spot that they had come to, and he stopped and put his arm about her.

"I love you," he said gently.

She looked into his face and smiled.

"And for your sake," he continued, "I have made up my mind to be patient with the ghost which I am positive is going to walk."

They stood there close together in silence for a long minute.

"I am very happy," she said at last.

"I am, too," he answered.

"I am very glad to cease to be clever."

He put his arm about her and looked straight into her bright, sweet, misty eyes.

"There are so much better things," he declared with a sort of fervent simplicity.

"For you?" she laughed.

"For us," he said, and his emphasis ends the story.



THE man who stands in his own way is not necessarily blocking the traffic.

LE GRAND HOMME

Par MICHEL PROVINS

Aline Bergeloup à son mari

"Mon cher Romain.

"**A**U bout de huit jours, tu t'étonnes enfin que j'aie quitté assez brusquement notre chez nous de Paris, prise d'une tendresse subite pour ma cousine Emilie, et que je prolonge autant ma villégiature auprès d'elle, dans ce grand village de Cladeisol où elle est institutrice. Le temps que tu as mis à soupçonner qu'il pourrait bien y avoir un dessous à ce séjour anormal ne me surprend pas. Je te connais. Tes idées évoluent laborieusement, surtout lorsque je ne les aiguillonne pas, et elles mettent un temps infini à émerger des brumes de ton cerveau. Je sais que ton opinion sur toi est absolument différente de la mienne, mais je suis décidée aujourd'hui à te dire une foule de vérités. J'en ai beaucoup sur le cœur, et depuis pas mal d'années.

"Certaine goutte d'eau acidulée a fait déborder le vase. C'était la semaine dernière, après ce dîner politique que nous avons donné à un certain nombre de tes collègues du Parlement pour fêter ta nomination au nouveau sous-secrétariat d'Etat créé pour toi,—sous-secrétariat des économies nationales,—qui va coûter d'abord quelques centaines de mille francs d'installation. Les économies, chez nous, commencent toujours par une dépense. Et un administrateur économe, toi qui ne pouvais pas équilibrer tout seul notre simple budget!

"Tu ne t'es pas vu, ce soir-là, c'était à mourir de rire . . . ou à pleurer. Gonflé de vanité jusqu'à l'explosion, important, solennel, semblant d'un geste décider du sort des nations, la

tête haute, fumante, perdue dans les nuages, émettant pontificalement des phrases de vaudeville que tu trouvais géniales: 'La France doit tenir d'une main le flambeau de la justice et de l'autre garder ouverts les horizons de la tolérance!' . . . 'Le pays veut être gouverné sous peine de manquer de direction!' . . . En ai-je assez souvent arrêté et corrigé de ces magistrales stupidités qui poussent naturellement dans ton cerveau comme les fleurs sur les pommiers! Tu crois à ta haute valeur sans comprendre le rôle de celle qui t'en a donné non pas la réalité, mais la façade, qui a réussi à t'imposer à tes électeurs, à ton groupe, à tes collègues, à tous ceux qui sourient de toi quand, par hasard, ils te surprennent livré à tes propres moyens et que dans Bergeloup ils devinent Prudhomme! 'Qui t'a fait roi?' pourrais-je dire en rééditant un souvenir historique que tu ignores certainement. Continuant dans l'ombre conjugale à agiter tes ficelles de grand pantin, jamais je ne t'aurais répondu: 'C'est moi,' jamais je n'aurais démoli l'illusion que tu as de toi-même, si l'autre soir, précisément, dans une insolente inconscience, tu ne m'avais blessée au plus intime du cœur.

"Un de tes amis faisait allusion à la modestie de mon origine, à notre passé, qui fut illégitime pendant tant d'années, au vernis que te donnerait, maintenant que te voilà dans les hommes arrivés, une union brillante. Et toi, lâche, ayant le respect humain d'une intimité à laquelle tu dois le bonheur et le succès, tu répondais: 'Que voulez-vous? Nous avons régularisé; il faut que je garde mon crampon! . . . Qu'

est-ce qu'elle deviendrait sans moi, la pauvre femme!

"Pauvre bonhomme! C'est moi qui veux m'amuser de ce que tu vas devenir sans moi. La voilà la raison de mon absence,—absence qui se prolongera jusqu'au divorce peut-être. Tu pourras à ton aise barboter jusqu'à la submersion dans ta vaseuse médiocrité, et moi, je vais pouvoir te dire enfin jusqu'à quel point tu es l'œuvre du 'crampon' que tu renies. Par je ne sais quelle pitié attendrie je me suis toujours effacée devant le grand enfant qu'au moins j'espérais reconnaissant; je laissais croire au pantin qu'il avait une âme. Le pantin devient cruel, il est temps de lui montrer qu'il est gonflé de son.

"Tu t'appelles Romain Bergeloup. Rien que cela est déjà superbe. On voit tout de suite de quelle lignée de petits bourgeois étroits et dindonesques tu es issu, et quel cerveau à angles droits tu peux avoir. Ce nom est une merveille, toute une psychologie. Tu t'y es adapté exactement, te montrant toujours aussi Romain que Bergeloup; mais il fallait une faculté plus haute que la tienne pour comprendre quel capital pouvait devenir un nom pareil à une époque d'envieuse égalité, où la peur des supériorités fait acclamer les bourdonnantes insignifiances. Romain Bergeloup devait être un grand homme local: voilà ce que moi, d'abord, j'ai deviné.

"Je te rappelle brièvement les étapes que tu as dû oublier dans la griserie de l'apothéose: les années où nous végétions dans notre petit trou provincial, toi, avoué famélique, pressurant pour nous en faire mal vivre quelques maigres procès; moi, tenue à l'écart par les dames bien pensantes de la ville, parce qu'éducatrice laïque, et assez mal vue des autres aussi parce que soupçonnée d'être ta maîtresse. Nous nous aimions dans la tristesse de notre misère sans horizon, ambitieux tous les deux, entremêlant nos tièdes tendresses de leçons que je te donnais pour refaire un peu ton instruction ratée de cancre. Te souviens-tu des séances d'orthographe où j'étais la récompense quand tu avais réussi à accorder une demi-douzaine de

participes? Puis vint l'affaire Baluchon que je te fis exploiter immédiatement comme affaire politique. Tu ne voulais pas, tu avais peur! . . . Et grâce à elle, pourtant, six mois après, tu étais conseiller municipal, l'année suivante, maire. C'était le pied à l'étrier. Nous avons joué de l'affaire Baluchon en toutes circonstances. Elle a été tout pour nous. . . . Pour lui aussi, d'ailleurs, puisqu'il est mort dans la gloire d'une célébrité régionale et qu'avant-hier tu as parlé officiellement à l'inauguration de son monument. Je viens même de lire ton discours. Comme on voit que je n'étais pas là pour corriger ton devoir et museler ta grandiloquence! En as-tu mis de ces évocations au défunt! 'Pauvre et grand Baluchon!' . . . 'Vieux Baluchon qui fut mon meilleur ami!' Et des: 'Si tu nous vois de ta demeure dernière, tu dois être fier de ton œuvre, fier des disciples de ta pensée pleurant à l'abri de ton ombre!' Tu ne te rendras donc jamais compte que ces choses-là sont du plus haut comique? Pauvre et petit Bergeloup, non, tu ne t'en rendras jamais compte! Tu as toujours été persuadé qu'ils étaient de ton cru les mots que je te soufflais, les combinaisons que je t'inspirais, et les discours et les articles!

"As-tu jamais deviné mes pieuses supercheries pour ménager ton amour-propre et t'entretenir dans l'illusion de ta valeur? J'avais déniché ce Gerbier, ancien lauréat des grands concours, réduit à écrire des adresses pour les magasins, ce garçon de très haute valeur, que tu viens d'avoir l'ingratitude de lâcher, au moment où tu pouvais le récompenser, enfin, par une place de chef de cabinet. La reconnaissance n'est, décidément, jamais une vertu d'imbécile. Si tu savais pourtant ce qu'il a fait pour toi! Devenu mon secrétaire, j'ai voulu qu'il s'efforçât à rendre son écriture toute pareille à la tienne. Et alors, nous te déroptions tes monstres informes d'articles et de discours. Refondus, recomposés, allégés de leur grossière pacotille, devenus élégants, littéraires, éloquents, on les replaçait sur ton bureau. Et, ensuite, tu nous disais avec inconscience—et surtout avec une

grand admiration de toi-même—ce que soi-disant ton génie venait de trouver.

"Par l'habitude, le comique du procédé disparaissait à nos yeux, nous étions presque touchés—comme les parents qui, à leurs bébés, apprennent des mots. Et, quand on te félicitait de ce que tu avais dit où écrit, nous arrivions à croire un peu que tu y étais pour quelque chose. Te rappelles-tu aussi ces soirées où ta mémoire se rebellait à vouloir retenir ce que nous tâchions d'y emmagasiner pour l'interpellation du lendemain, le toast d'un banquet ou les allocutions qu'il faut à l'inauguration d'un buste ou d'un groupe scolaire?"

"Quel mal on avait pour empêcher ton naturel de reprendre le dessus. Tu vois ce qu'il fait lorsqu'il est lâché devant le monument d'un Baluchon!"

"Moi partie, te voilà livré à tes propres moyens. Tu vas pouvoir donner ta mesure. On connaîtra le vrai Romain Bergeloup. Je ne suis pas fâchée de cela. Je ne suis pas fâchée non plus—puisque tu as brisé en moi ce sentiment de me croire, au moins, payée d'un retour affectueux,—je ne suis pas fâchée de déboulonner ta propre idole. 'Qui t'a fait roi?' Tu le sais maintenant si, jusqu'ici, tu ne l'as jamais soupçonné.

"Oh! je me doute bien que tu hausseras les épaules, que tu riras de ma prétention d'avoir été la vraie créatrice, que tu t'imagineras de plus en plus être le fils de tes œuvres—comme tu le dis souvent avec emphase devant les naïfs qui le gobent. Pourtant, si aveugle que tu sois pour ton propre mérite, il y a des faits que je cite et dont il faudra bien te souvenir. Et puis, surtout, il y aura la pratique. Encore quelques Baluchons à célébrer et on commencera à s'amuser dans les journaux. Tu deviendras, au théâtre, un bon type de revue. Il est vrai que tu prendras cela pour de la gloire!"

"Mon cher grand homme, au revoir. Ce sera même adieu, si tu ne me rappelles pas. Car je ne reviendrai que sur un humble mot de toi, me disant: 'Ma chère Aline, tu n'es pas le crampon que je m'impose, mais la femme qui m'est nécessaire et que j'aime!'"

"Qui sait? Peut-être aurai-je la tristesse de ne le recevoir jamais!"

"ALINE."

CELLE QU'ON ENVOIE

De Paris, Aline Bergeloup à sa cousine Emilie.

"... Tu n'es pas encore revenue, j'en suis sûre, de mon brusque retour auprès de Romain, qui ne l'avait pas sollicité, du reste. Tu te demandes comment une telle chose a été possible après la lettre que je lui avais écrite le mois dernier—lettre que nous avions lue et relue ensemble et dont tu t'étais tant amusée.

"Ne l'avais-je donc pas mise à la poste? Le jour même, non. Le lendemain, non plus; et le surlendemain, pas davantage. J'ai attendu, hésité. C'est très cruel de détruire chez un homme—chez celui qu'on a aidé, et aimé surtout—ce qui est la confiance en soi, et la joie de se dire l'instrument de sa force!"

"J'ai tellement différé de casser cela, que je n'en ai plus eu l'envie. Et puis sont arrivés les échecs de mon pauvre grand homme. Toutes ses qualités—et il en a tout de même de bien à lui—se trouvaient sans boussole. Je comprenais aussi qu'il ne le voyait pas, et que sans se rendre compte de ce qui lui manquait, il était malheureux.

"Alors, tout simplement, je suis revenue. J'ai repris ma place d'inspiratrice et de consolatrice sans y faire la moindre allusion dans le présent et dans le passé. Et comme un être privé d'oxygène qui revient à la vie à mesure qu'il retrouve de l'air pur sans savoir d'où il vient, mon cher bonhomme a retrouvé tout ce qu'il croit être ses propres énergies, ne s'expliquant pas qu'elles lui aient un moment manqué, et que son étoile, brillante de nouveau, se soit une minute obscurcie.

"N'est-ce pas, après tout, notre vrai rôle de femme, très doux dans sa mystérieuse modestie? Donner sans qu'on le sache, être pour l'homme le fluide, le haume ou le génie, sans qu'il sente trop d'où lui viennent la caresse et l'étincelle.

"Ta cousine et amie,

"ALINE."

THE LAST OF THE VICTORIANS

By H. L. MENCKEN

THE tears shed, a few months back, over the biers of George Meredith and Algernon Charles Swinburne were shed a bit too soon. It was the theory of the mourners who shed them that they were mourning the passing of an epoch—that the earth, as it closed over novelist and poet, was taking unto itself the last of the Victorians. But they were wrong, these wailers and gnashers of teeth, and their copious lamentation was in vain, for beyond the salt seas, observing the world from his watch tower in a little prairie town, there yet dwelt, in all the vigor of early middle age, a Victorian a million times as victorian as either of the pair of long lingering Victorians there and then laid to rest. His name was William Allen White, and he is still with us. If he lives as long as Tennyson, and does not reform, our grandchildren will see the Victorian era gasping out its last breath in the year 1951. And eighty-three is no great age in Kansas. It may be 1960, or even 1970, indeed, before the world hears the last of Honest Poverty, Chaste Affection and Manly Tears.

The Thackeray of "Pendennis" and "Vanity Fair" was the archetype of the Victorian poet and philosopher, even more so than the Dickens of "David Copperfield" or the Tennyson of "Lady Clara Vere de Vere," and it is this Thackeray that lives again in Mr. White. The externals of his method suggest the idea forcibly: he has all of Thackeray's fondness for stopping to harangue his audience; he has taken over, as a matter of legitimate inheritance, all of Thackeray's showman's kit of dolls, puppets, wires, footlights

and drop curtains; and in more than one place his style is a miraculously exact imitation of Thackeray at his worst.

But not only the externals of "A CERTAIN RICH MAN" (*Macmillan*, \$1.50) make the ghost of Titmarsh walk. The resemblance lies deeper than that; it is in Mr. White's fundamental concepts, in his morality, in his attitude toward the phenomena of life. His point of view is essentially feminine. He esteems yielding above victory, sentiment above reality, piety above progress. Of the gorgeous drama which lies in the ruthless struggle for existence he seems to have no notion whatever. Even in the fact of death itself—and, like a good Victorian, he indulges in a wholesale massacre of characters—he sees nothing mysterious, staggering, awful, inexplicable, but only a good excuse for a sentimental orgy.

But before elaborating this objection it may be well to take a look at Mr. White's book, for the words I have already written may appear to denounce it, out of hand, as rubbish. This is by no means my intention. Even my allegation that its style suggests Thackeray at his worst is not to be taken as unmitigated condemnation, for Thackeray at his worst was still a craftsman of the first rank. Search "Lovell the Widower" and "The Newcomes" from end to end, and however loud an occasional paragraph may make you yell, you must still admit that it is not quite so bad as Hall Caine at his best. Mr. White has absorbed some measure of this superb craftsmanship, along with the oozy philosophy accompany-

ing it. The background of his story is laid on with remarkable skill, and in all those scenes in which he deals with his people as large groups there is abundant insight and reality. No other novelist has depicted more intelligibly that flood of evangelical passion which led up to the Civil War, and none other in America, to my knowledge, has drawn a more vivid and credible picture of battle than that which is to be found in the third chapter of "A CERTAIN RICH MAN." But when Mr. White comes to deal with his characters as individuals, his sentimentality overcomes him and they cease to be human.

The scene of the story is Kansas and the central personage is John Barclay, the son of an abolitionist. John's father, back in the early fifties, left fortune and comfort in New England to preach the gospel of freedom on the border. He was murdered for his pains, and so, at the opening of the story, we find John a barefoot boy in the little town of Sycamore Ridge, out on the dusty prairie—the son of a gaunt, undaunted, unforgetting widow, the town washerwoman. Until he is well into his teens there is little to distinguish the boy from other boys. He runs away to the war, gets a wound which lames him for life and is dragged home. He falls in love with a little girl and carries her image with him to college. One day she dies—"and so," says Mr. White, "his heart curdled."

It is the business of the story to show us the lamentable consequences of this curdling. John comes home with a license to practise law and a determination to make the world his oyster. The town of Sycamore Ridge is growing fast—not booming, but growing. A bank has been started and John's deposit slip for \$178.53—the first slip received on the opening day—is framed for all to see. The president of the bank is the father of John's best friend, and in the circumstance there is opportunity for John. He seizes it by borrowing from the bank to finance a scheme for robbing the adjacent peasants of their wheat

lands. The scheme wobbles, and the old banker, to save his bank, is forced into forgery. It is the first sign of that blight which is to radiate from John all the days of his life.

His second victim is the fiancée of his best friend and own sister to his lost love. The best friend has been sent to New York to help promote John's plans, and in his absence an insinuating stranger with money begins to pay addresses to the neglected lady. John encourages her to treachery, and justifies himself on the ground that, without the stranger's money all hands will face bankruptcy and even jail. Here the cloven hoof appears and John stands forth as the veritable villain of the old romances. Thereafter his pathway to millions is marked by ruthless sacrifices. He piles up his gold, but broken hearts lie all about. He becomes an insatiable monster of opulence, devouring everything in reach. In the end he devours his own happiness, and then comes Mr. White's cue for a parting saturnalia of sentiment. Where once ran sweat and blood, there now comes a cloudburst of tears. The last chapters drip; the very last words of the book are "the tears, the tears!"

The Victorian flavor in this improbable fiction is to be accounted for, however, not by the actual incidents—not even, indeed, by John's Dickens-like and entirely incredible repentance toward the close—but by the banal philosophy underlying them. If Mr. White merely told his story, we would marvel at John as a new and inconceivable sort of plutocrat and let it go at that, but he insists upon reading the lesson for the day, earnestly and incessantly, as he ambles on. This lesson, stripped of verbiage, may be reduced to the following proposition: That the impulse which leads a young man of, say, twenty-four years to seek marriage with some particular young woman of, say, twenty-two, is by overwhelming odds the most elevating, valuable, noble, honorable and godlike impulse native to the human consciousness. Beside it, in the view of Mr. White, the impulse

of John Barclay to rise out of the squalor of his childhood, to acquire wealth for the power that goes with it and to use that power to reorganize the food supply of a nation—to do things, in brief, that no other man had ever been able to do since the beginning of the world—this impulse, says Mr. White, was and is not only paltry, but also downright felonious.

I have no doubt that every high school girl in the United States will agree with him, but it seems to me improbable that he will gain many disciples among the more reflective members of the other sex. Whatever his magic at the matinee, the fact remains that Romeo Montague was of vastly less originality and consideration as a man, and, in consequence, of vastly less bulk as a hero than Christopher Columbus. Montague's supreme achievement, the most stupendous thanks he could offer up for the gift of life, was to die of love, and after he had died the world rolled on as before. But after Columbus had planted his banner on the coral strand of San Salvador the world began to revolve in a new and superior manner. The life of the one man was no more valuable nor important than that of a theologian, but that of the other was worth a continent. Ah, cries the sentimental Mr. White, but is success, or even human progress, as great a boon as happiness? My answer to that is that happiness and the sensation of success are so nearly alike that I, for one, have never been able to tell them apart. The more difficult and enviable and more nearly unique the success, the greater the happiness. Not even one of Mr. White's young lovers, I take it, would see much in love—in its psychic, as opposed to its purely Biblical aspect—if it involved no joy of chase and thrill of capture.

But let us have done with all this gloomy burrowing into the metaphysic. Over all remains the fact that Mr. White has tried to write a sentimental story and has succeeded diabolically. If you are a sentimentalist it will delight you; if you are not it will amuse

you. In either case you will probably read every word of it, for a thunderous sincerity and no little skill are in it. The author does not write of some unreal Zenda, Florodora or other stage land, but of the sun-baked, unwashed Kansas that he knows and loves. His characters, whatever their psychological failings, always remain assertively American. And being Americans, they are as sentimental as their creator, for sentimentality is our national weakness, as bigotry is our national vice.

The author writes English with a journeyman's assurance. His climaxes are built up admirably, and there is a certain lyric fluency in his sentences. But now and again a curious fault reveals itself. I refer to his fondness for beginning sentences with conjunctions. On page seven, for example, there are ten sentences, and six of them begin with "and," "but" or "for"—a pernicious affectation, making for tedious singsong.

"THE BILL-TOPPERS," by André Castaigne (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50), is a romance of vaudeville, in which practically all the characters are performers. The heroine is a trick cyclist and the hero is a gentleman who risks his life twice daily for the wages of a John Hays Hammond. It is a novel that explores a new field, and Mr. Castaigne manages to make that field mildly interesting. But why didn't he call his book "The Headliners" instead of "The Bill-Toppers"? Certainly, when one uses slang, it is well to use slang comprehensible to the ultimate consumer.

"THE MAKING OF BOBBY BURNIT," by George Randolph Chester (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50), is a fantastic story of American life, in which one of the principal characters is a dead man. But the soul of this dead man lives after him in the form of a last will and testament, in which, beside the customary legal balderdash, there appears a store of wise counsel for his son. How the son profits thereby is told by

Mr. Chester in thirty racy chapters. These chapters are as devoid of literary polish as a want ad., but anyone who denies that they are amusing is beyond all reach of farce.

IN "DAVID BRAN" (*Page*, \$1.50) Morley Roberts "presents in a new light," according to the canned review on the cover, "the old problem of a man and two women." Mr. Roberts, unhappily, is rather unfortunate in the choice of his characters. He makes them simple fisher folk, and yet, by the exigencies of his study, he must fill them with exceedingly complicated thoughts and emotions. The result is an air of nature faking and an irresistible impulse on the part of the reader to laugh in the author's most solemn moments. At one place David Bran, leaving home for a stroll and expecting to find himself a father on his return, seeks out and makes love to the Other Woman. "I love my Kate," he soliloquizes, "my wife, my wife!"—but—"I could cry aloud for Lou." In the language of real folk of David's elemental organization the thought is commonly expressed more vulgarly, thus: "I love my wife, but O you kid!" Altogether, a story in which the author labors rather heavily to be "powerful."

"THE GOOSE GIRL," by the light-hearted and unquenchable Harold MacGrath (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50), is a fairy tale spread out over 383 unenlightening but far from stupid pages. The author doesn't care a hang for mental processes, soul struggles and psychic problems; his sole business is to get on with his story. It is the old story of Cinderella, with a Cinderella more beautiful and charming than ever before and a hero more magnificent. A felicitous amalgamation of Grimm and Hawkins, of Wonderland and Zenda.

Miss Miriam Michelson is nothing if not ingenious, and in "MICHAEL THWAITE'S WIFE" (*Doubleday-Page*, \$1.50) she proves it anew. The central characters are our old friends the

Confused Twins. One of them is an angel and the other a devil, but in mere bodily architecture they are identical. Being the exact equal of her sister in pulchritude, and having, in addition, the advantage of her devilishness, the devil captures the Man, only to desert him later on for Another. So far the story bears a close resemblance to all other tales of Confused Twins, but now Miss Michelson begins to put on the high gear. The result is a series of thrills, surprises and ambuscades—in short, a literary joy ride.

"HALF A CHANCE," by Frederic S. ISHAM (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50), is an agreeable fiction which maintains the Socialistic thesis (though perhaps Mr. Isham is no more a Socialist than I) that a man is the victim of his environment. Give the poor better dinners and more time to read books, say the Socialists, and they will cease to offend the laws and the senses. Mr. Isham's hero proves it. At the start he is a low, coarse fellow—a fellow so low and coarse, indeed, that the police decide to exile him for his country's good. On his way out to Botany Bay he is shipwrecked. A library of books is washed ashore upon his desert isle, and he proceeds to read them. Half of them are law books. When he gets back to civilization he is a serious, dignified and learned barrister, and the heroine is very glad to marry him. Altogether a brisk and entertaining story, with not too much reality in it.

"SIXPENNY PIECES," by A. Neil Lyons (*Lane*, \$1.50), is a study of human existence in the East End of London. Here we behold men and women at the nadir of efficiency. Born sick in mind and body, their sole purpose in life seems to be to breed beings more wretched even than themselves. The charity which keeps them alive is the same silly, fanatical charity that engendered their caste; they are living proofs that our Christian civilization would do more for the race if it were grounded less upon poetical bathos and more upon natural laws. Mr.

Lyons's book is not a tract but an attempt to set forth reality. It makes gloomy reading, but there is the grip of tragedy in it.

"THE SCORE," by Lucas Malet (*Dutton*, \$1.50), is made up of two short stories "Out in the Open" and "Miserere Nobis." "Out in the Open" is an English tale in the manner of the late John Oliver Hobbes. The characters are three, an eminent English actress with a past, a playwright who makes love to her like a philosopher and a rising young statesman who makes love to her like a sailor. The conversation of all three, even in their most passionate moments, is made up of elaborate epigrams, as carefully worded as a mortgage and as empty of substance as a memorial address in Congress. No doubt a certain sort of skill is needed to construct such vapid foolishness, and no doubt that skill is rather rare, but that it is also valuable to the world I am unable to affirm.

IN reading "IN THE SHADOW OF THE PEAKS," by Stata B. Couch (*Cochrane*, \$1.50), I got as far as page twelve. There, in plain letters, appeared the following remark of the hero:

You have touched upon my weak point. I have a theory, a pet theory, and it is along spook lines.

Thereupon I closed the book with a groan, and so I can tell you no more about it. It is an attractive, well printed book of 320 pages, bound in green, and for all I know, it may be a masterpiece comparable to "Barry Lyndon," "Tom Jones" or "Typhoon." But you will have to find out for yourself. No more psychical researching in mine! I have had enough!

"A BRANCH OF MAY," by Lizette Woodworth Reese (*Mosher*, \$1.25), is a slim but very attractive little reprint of some of Miss Reese's best lyrics. The prim gray of the cover well mirrors the emotional quality of the verse within. There is no note of passion in it, no echo of Herrick's gay song; the love with which it deals is commonly little

more than a memory of cold kisses. And yet a suggestion of Herrick will not down. It appears again and again, in tricks of phrase, in images and turns of thought. To Herrick the world was a flower garden, and so it is to Miss Reese.

It may be objected to in this poet that her songs show too little diversity of key, that their mood is too constantly somber. This objection would be valid if urged against a writer of greater pretensions, but Miss Reese's verses are put forth so modestly and so rarely that in her case we may well be thankful without question for whatever she gives us. She is almost a stranger to the magazines; her books are few and thin; her whole work, I believe, scarcely comprises a hundred poems. And yet in that scant collection there are beauties of a rare and perfect sort, beauties that set the author in the very first rank of American singers. Her one sonnet, "Tears," is beyond all risk of overpraise. Keats himself would have been ready to acknowledge it, not only willingly, but proudly.

ANOTHER Southern poet whose best work touches the heights is Robert Loveman. Loveman, it must be admitted, is at his best but seldom. In his latest book, "THE BLUSHFUL SOUTH AND HIPPOCRENE" (*Lippincott*, \$1.00), there are many stanzas which show no greater merit than a workmanlike finish. They are triumphs of verbal gem cutting—and nothing more. But we may well forgive so excellent a poet his displays of mere virtuosity. He has "It Isn't Raining Rain to Me" behind him, and that is glory enough for one man.

THE name of Tom McInnes is new to me. His first book of verses comes down from Montreal in a startling red cover and with eight square inches of eulogy from the Canadian critics on the wrapper. Within there is a volcanic miscellany of good and bad: a rhapsody upon the bloody death of a Yukon Sappho; a ballad with the sweet refrain, "But what the hell, Bill, what

the hell!"; a dozen bad imitations of Kipling, Bret Harte, even Dante Gabriel Rossetti; an astonishingly excellent imitation of Walt Whitman. It is the wild life of mining camp, trail and desert, of Farthest West and Farthest North, that Mr. McInnes sings. He has thrown the Ten Commandments overboard, and a lot of human statutes with them. He is not afraid of the obvious thought and the vulgar word; his dithyrambs are ever close to the ground. Now and then, reading his stanzas, you will laugh, but more often their wild earnestness, their breezy realism and their sheer color will get under your hide. The book is called "LONESOME BAR" (*Desbarats*, \$1.00).

"SATAN," by Lewis Sperry Chafer (*Gospel Pub. House*, \$1.00), is the most sympathetic and illuminating study of the General Manager of Hell that has appeared since the death of the late Emanuel Swedenborg. Mr. Chafer is no campaign biographer, rushing into print with a hurried, scissors-and-paste eulogy of his hero; neither is he a misguided scaramouch, seeking to provoke the willing snicker with cheap ribaldry. His attitude toward Satan is always reverent; like St. Anselm, Gregory the Great, Vincent of Beauvais and other primeval laborers in the same field, he is fascinated by the very villainy of the man. In all its history, he says, the cosmos has never seen another such subtle scoundrel. He is the emperor of chicanery, of hocus-pocus, of false pretenses, of cold-blooded, calculating treachery. To escape his foul machinations one must sleep with an eye open and fit one's conscience with a hair trigger.

There is much material in this book that the student will not find in previous biographies of Satan. Mr. Chafer has discovered, for example, that Psychical Research, as it is practised today by many a whiskered professor and desiccated old maid, is really a device of Nick for luring the unwary down his incandescent chutes. The same thing is true, he says, of Professor James's quasi-philosophy of

Pragmatism. This being the case, there appear the highest theological excuse and precedent for burning Professor James at the stake. I, for one, should assist at the arson with sincere delight.

"THE ORCHESTRAL INSTRUMENTS AND WHAT THEY DO," by Daniel Gregory Mason (*Novello*, \$1.00), is an excellent little primer for those folks whose love of music is unaccompanied by any knowledge whatever. It begins with an exposition of the elements of acoustics, and it goes on to a description, seriatim, of the fiddles, pipes, horns and tom-toms of the modern orchestra. Mr. Mason sets out by assuming that his reader is in the depths of ignorance, and accordingly his opening instructions are elaborately painstaking. After showing a picture of a man playing a first violin, for example, he proceeds, a few pages further on, to show a picture of a man playing a second violin. This magnificent preciseness, however, is not kept up, for when he comes to the wood wind, he shows only one clarinet, and the reader is forced to dig out of the text the architectural difference between a clarinet in B and one in A. Again, the differences between a viola and a bratsche and a bassoon and a fagotto are left to the text.

In the end there is an excellent chapter of advice, in which beginners are urged to make a practice of poring over orchestra scores. It is the common superstition that scores are only for the elect, who are supposed to be able to read them as fluently as an ordinary man reads newspaper headlines. In sober truth the elect struggle as diabolically with a page of Strauss as the beginner struggles with a page of Haydn. Mr. Mason is right: let the beginner begin with Haydn and then keep on. He will learn a lot, and he will have a lot of fun.

A NEW series of reprints of the older English dramatists, just beginning to appear under the name of "THE SWAN

DRAMATISTS" (*Sturgis and Walton Co.*), brings the number of current editions up to three. The excellent Mermaid series is deservedly popular, and the Belles Lettres series, edited by Professor George P. Baker of Harvard, is fast making its way. The Mermaid books are notable for their accurate texts and their quite extraordinary typographical beauty, while those of the Belles Lettres edition are chiefly valuable for their excellent notes and bibliographies. The Swan series, which begins with Christopher Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus" (45 cents), must depend for success upon its convenient form and its cheapness. The introduction to the first volume is a mere abridgment from A. W. Ward and the notes are inconsequential, but the text is clearly printed and the book has the attractive handiness of the Temple Shakespeare. The new edition, in a word, appears to be planned for the reader rather than for the student. And an edition of this sort has long been wanted.

"SIX MASTERS OF DISILLUSION," by Algar Thorold (*Dutton*, \$1.50), is a book which has its most interesting chapter at the end. In the chapters before that Dr. Thorold essays to expound the private codes of half a dozen rebels against the law and the prophets—Fontenelle, Mérimée, Fabre, Huysmans, Maeterlinck and Anatole France—and then, at the end in a brief epilogue he speaks for himself. This epilogue is a masterly presentation in a few paragraphs of the functions and limitations of philosophy. The search for the truth, says M. Thorold, is not an enterprise that appeals to the average man, for his yearning for the ultimate verities is always less pressing than his yearning for a rock and a refuge. Even the true philosopher, in his weaker moments, sometimes feels an atavistic impulse to seek shelter in the old faiths of his race. But, fortunately for humanity, there are extraordinary men in whom this impulse appears but rarely. These men are the captains in the march of progress. They get little

honor while they live—in the sense of popular appreciation—and their doubts often torture them, but it is plain that in the long run they serve their fellow men as no mere emperors and high priests can ever do. The comforts of faith may seem to make life more bearable, but it is disillusion that makes wider and wider the gap between man and the ape.

M. Thorold's choice of disillusionists is scarcely satisfying to the Anglo-Saxon reader. His nomination of Fontenelle will meet a hearty aye, but why Huysmans and Maeterlinck? Since the Revolution, indeed, France has learned more than she has taught of actuality. Her most daring adventurers have seemed academicians when compared to Ibsen and Huxley, Haeckel and Nietzsche.

"GEORGE MEREDITH," by J. A. Hamilton (*Kennerley*, \$4.00), is neither biography nor criticism, but the raw material of both. The author's aim is to make a digest of all the magazine articles, books, eulogies, philippics and letters to the editor written about Meredith since the year '51, and this aim he achieves nobly in four hundred closely printed pages. Despite the lamentable gaps in the biographical portion, the book gives a vivid and no doubt accurate picture of Meredith the man. We see him chiefly in his old age—no longer the austere artist, but a genial and likable oldster, wandering down his Surrey lanes and chattering gaily of all things under the sun. Mr. Hamilton has unearthed, classified and labeled a rich store of early Meredithiana. He has scotched forever a host of mendacious legends and rid the novelist's life of much of the mystery that once clustered round it. Not only to the critic but also to the general reader his book is useful and agreeable.

AFTER THE CATAclysm—
by H. Percy Blanchard.
(*Cochrane*, \$1.25)

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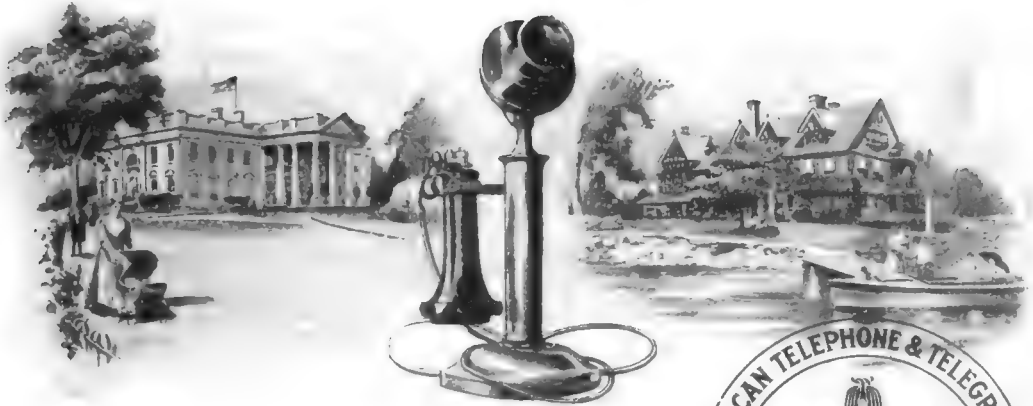
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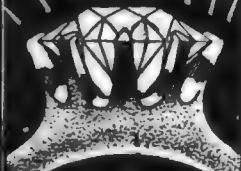
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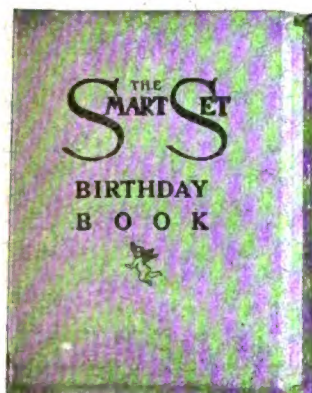
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